Ireland and the Basque Country: Nationalisms in Contact, 1895-1939

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the relationships between Irish and Basque nationalists and nationalisms from 1895 to 1939—a period of rapid, drastic change in both contexts. In the Basque Country, 1895 marked the birth of the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Party), concurrent with the development of the cultural nationalist movement known as the 'Gaelic revival' in pre-revolutionary Ireland. In 1939, the Spanish Civil War ended with the destruction of the Spanish Second Republic, plunging Basque nationalism into decades of intense persecution. Conversely, at this same time, Irish nationalist aspirations were realized to an unprecedented degree during the 'republicanization' of the Irish Free State under Irish leader Éamon de Valera.

Contrary to romantic visions of natural solidarity between these two nationalist movements, this research offers a more nuanced account of the relationship. Ireland was an important source of inspiration for Basque nationalists throughout this period, particularly those of a more radical separatist tendency. However, there were moments when the mainstream Basque nationalist movement expressed little sympathy for Irish independence. Likewise, Ireland was not always sympathetic to the plight of Basque nationalists, particularly during the Spanish Civil War.

Through an analysis of primary sources on both sides, ranging from Basque nationalist periodicals to Irish diplomatic documents, this thesis pieces together a detailed account of Basque-Irish relations during the period in question. The broader picture shows numerous contradictions and ironies in the relationship(s) in this period, demonstrating the evolving and multi-faceted nature of these nationalisms—the interaction between which cannot be characterized simply.

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Notes on Language

All text originally in a language other than English has been translated herein. Epigraphs appear first in the original language with a translation in the footnotes. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

This work does not employ Basque language conventions that are no longer standard. However, key terms remain in their contemporary dialectal spelling rather than being rendered in their modern Standard Basque spelling.

I have used nativized English names for places when possible (hence Biscay instead of *Bizkaia*/*Vizcaya*). Otherwise, I have endeavoured to use the currently-accepted official spellings for Basque toponyms rather than their Castilian equivalents, when such is the case (hence *Gipuzkoa* instead of *Guipúzcoa*, etc.). In other cases, I have used only the Basque place name for hyphenated Basque-Castilian bilingual place names, for the sake of convenience. Irish places are referred to in English, and I have not used Gaelicized names unless the person was usually known by such. Any errors of judgement on these matters are my own.

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Abbreviations

Archives

ANV:	Archivo del Nacionalismo Vasco (Bilbao)
NA:	National Archives (London)
NAI:	National Archives of Ireland (Dublin)
NLI:	National Library of Ireland (Dublin)
UCDA:	University College Dublin Archives (Dublin)

Terms

CNV:	*Comunión Nacionalista Vasca* (Basque Nationalist Communion)
EAB:	*Emakume Abertzale Batza* (Association of Patriot Women)
ETA:	*Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (Basque Country and Freedom)
IRA:	Irish Republican Army
PNV:	*Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (Basque Nationalist Party)

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INTRODUCTION

"La solidaridad, cada vez más estrecha, de las gentes y el intercambio, cada día más intenso, de ideas y sentimientos, rompen hoy contra todo aislamiento."

Engracio Aranzadi, 1916[1]

In 2018, the armed Basque separatist organization *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA—Basque Country and Freedom) formally disbanded. Many Basque nationalists hoped to imitate the Irish peace process, and even received input from Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams himself over the years.[2] Arnaldo Otegi, considered a key figure in ETA's disarmament, has often been referred to as 'the Basque Gerry Adams'.[3] Basque flags and murals can still be found in Ireland, and vice versa—products of a solidarity largely based in the heydays of the armed struggles of ETA and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Figure 1: Arnaldo Otegi mural in Belfast (2013)

Credit to Peadar Whelan (*An Phoblacht*)

[1] "Solidarity between peoples, increasingly strong, and the exchange of ideas and feelings, every day more intense, today counters any isolationism," Kizkitza (pseud. Engracio Aranzadi), "Ante la revolución irlandesa," *Euzkadi* no. 1204 (May 28, 1916).
[2] Paddy Woodworth, "The Spanish-Basque Peace Process: How to Get Things Wrong," *World Policy Journal* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 65-73; Gerry Adams, "Adams praises historic advance in Basque peace process," http://www.sinnfein.ie/contents/49290.
[3] Jane Walker, "Basque leader Otegi jailed for 15 months," *Irish Times* (Apr. 28, 2006).

Given their relative geographical proximity, it is no surprise that there is a much longer history of contact between Ireland and the Basque Country. Since at least the twelfth century, there has been a widespread understanding that the two peoples are closely linked. In circa 1136, Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed that ancient Ireland was "given to be inhabited by the *Basclenses*, who had been banished out of Spain."[4] This account initiated a Basque-Irish mythology which was to have a surprisingly long lifespan.[5] Only a few decades later, Gerald of Wales wrote in *The Conquest of Ireland* that "the people of Ireland came first out of the Basques and out of Bayonne, which now belongs to Gascony, ruled by the English Crown."[6] At that time, English King Henry II was married to Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose holding of the Duchy of Aquitaine encompassed the northernmost part of predominantly-Basque territory. Gerald of Wales thus claimed by an interesting logical deduction that "therefore you might well understand that by ancient right and by new, the English Crown rightfully has lordship over Ireland."[7]

A travel account from 1782 by Sir John Talbot Dillon, an Irish nobleman, remarked that "[t]he manners of the Biscayners, and the ancient Irish, are so similar on many occasions, *as to encourage the notion of the Irish being descended from them* […] So many concurring circumstances support *the idea of their having been originally one*

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[4] Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Aaron Thompson, ed. J. A. Giles (Cambridge [Ontario]: In Parentheses Publications, 1999), 47; This edition perpetuates the typographical error of calling them *Barclenses*, which historically has been used as proof of a Semitic origin of the Irish, *bar-* being a Semitic patronymic prefix (see Laurence Waddell, *The Phoenician Origin of Britons, Scots and Anglo-Saxons*, 1924). However, *Barclenses* was merely a typo in an early reproduction of the manuscript which seems to have been copied for centuries, while the older manuscript (MS. Red. 13 D. ii.) still reads *Basclenses*. See the notes of editor Frederic Madden in *Layamon's Brut*, Vol. 3 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1847), 328.

[5] Julio-César Santoyo, *Irlandeses y vascos: Evolución histórica de una leyenda* (Bilbao: Durango Zugaza, 1979), 46.

[6] I have taken the liberty of providing a more modern English rendition of the fairly archaic text in a 15th-century edition (circa 1440 by Rawlinson) reproduced in *The English Conquest of Ireland, A.D. 1166-1185, Mainly From the 'Expugnatio Hibernica' of Giraldus Cambrensis*, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1896), 137; To set the translation record straight, this version reads: "On othyr halue, the Pepil of Irlande come fryste out of Bascles *and* out of Bayon, that longyth now to gascoyne, Whereof the kynges of Englande ben lordys." The original Latin reads: "Praeterea urbs Baonensis, quam hodie nostra continet Gasconia, Blasconiae caput est, unde Hibernenses provenerant," which might be translated as "Furthermore, the Irish came from the city of Bayonne, the capital of Blasconia [the Basque Country], which today our Gascony contains." Notably the original Latin version is less explicit about the Irish actually *being* Basque than is its fifteenth-century translation.

[7] Ibid; "And thus ye may wel vndyrstonde that, both by olde ryght and by new, the kynges of England owen well to haue the lorchipp of Irland."

people."[8] In the 1837 work *The Basque Provinces*, news correspondent and author Edward Bell Stephens remarked:

> The Biscayans are indeed a highly intelligent, sociable, and amiable people. They possess all the natural active politeness of the Irish peasantry, without any alloy of servility [...] They differ however so much in one material respect from the Irish, that I can scarcely believe the latter *have any fair claim to a common origin*, [...] viz. Their remarkable sobriety, notwithstanding the abundance of wine and aguardiente in the country.[9]

Overall, there seems to have been a fairly common understanding of an ancient relationship between the two peoples. Irish racial and linguistic studies throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth century made frequent reference to a Basque origin of the Irish. One philologist noted that "there are diversities in the physical aspect of the Irish population; and it is well worthy of inquiry how far any portion conform with the type of the neighbouring Basque."[10] Another account of pre-historic Ireland from 1902 claimed that "[t]he Irish are a mixed race, the Basque and the Celt went to their formation. The original inhabitants of the country were Basque, but successive Celtic invasions obliterated the ancient Basque language, and altered the physical appearance of the people."[11]

The relationship between Ireland and the Basque Country was to assume a new character with the rise of modern nationalism. The so-called 'long gestation' of revolutionary Irish nationalism began in the 1890s, gradually supplanting the mostly constitutional nationalist Home Rule movement. Historian Roy Foster remarks that this was "a generation bent on self-transformation," and marked by "a sense of deep differentiation from their parents' generation."[12] Indeed, 1916 Easter Rising leader Pádraic Pearse once declared: "There has been nothing more terrible in Irish history than the failure of the last generation."[13]

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[8] John Talbot Dillon, *Travels through Spain* (London: R. Baldwin, 1782), 167-168; Emphasis mine.
[9] Edward Bell Stephens, *The Basque Provinces* (London: Whittaker & Co., 1837), 151-152; Emphasis mine.
[10] Hyde Clarke, "On the Pre-Celtic Epoch in Ireland," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (1836-1869)* 10 (1866-1869): 102.
[11] "A History of Ireland," *All Ireland Review* 3, no. 43 (Dec. 27, 1902): 704.
[12] R. F. Foster, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (London: Penguin, 2015), 11.
[13] Pádraic Pearse, "Ghosts" (1915), in *Political Writings and Speeches* (Dublin: Talbot, 1962), 223.

The Basque Country was similar in this regard. Basque nationalism was a turn away from (and an offshoot of) Carlism, a traditionalist political movement that sought the installment of a more conservative royal line which would reinstate the *fueros*—historical chartered rights which granted a range of social and economic privileges to the Basques and allowed the Basque provinces to govern themselves under their own laws. The *fueros* fell to Spain's nineteenth-century liberal project of centralization after a series of civil wars (the Carlist Wars). While Basque Carlists desired a return to the political autonomy they enjoyed prior to the Convention of Vergara (Bergara), which ended the First Carlist War (1833-1839), a young student named Sabino Arana came to a new realization in 1882. According to Arana, their homeland was neither "theoretically nor juridically considered a part or region of the Spanish nation, but a veritable nation of its own, currently dominated" by Spain.[14] It was not a question of re-obtaining privileges from the Spanish Crown, but of reasserting their intrinsic nationhood. In 1897, the still-fringe group of Basque nationalists sent a telegram to the Lord Mayor of Dublin which read: "Basque people lament like Ireland loss of their liberty. Therefore congregated to-day under holy oak of Guernica, in remberance [sic] better times and to acquire strength to see them return. We send hearty salute through you to noble and courageous people of Ireland."[15]

These two nationalisms, guided by many of the same transnational cultural undercurrents, were to become increasingly entangled in the following decades. As Ireland experienced a quashed uprising, a war against the British, partition of the island, and then a civil war, ultimately forming a self-governing dominion, Basque nationalists, particularly those of the most radical factions, took an increasing interest in the Irish example. At times they saw parallels between Basque and Irish history—two nations, according to their nationalist narratives, which saw their freedoms eroded by an imperialist neighbour against whom they had a long history of struggle. Apparent historical parallels readily became contemporary comparisons, which by extension raised the question of whether the 'Irish model' was appropriate for the Basque nationalist cause. However, it was not until the Spanish Civil War that Basque nationalists attained

[14] *Bizkaitarra* no. 8 (Apr. 22, 1894), in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sabindiar-Batza, 1965), 267.
[15] "Message from Spain," *Evening Herald* (Jul. 27, 1897).

autonomy (albeit for only a part of the Spanish, or 'southern', Basque Country). Meanwhile in Ireland, the Spanish Civil War exacerbated political rivalries still tense from the Irish Civil War, with two radically different visions of what Ireland ought to be reflected on either side of the war in Spain. Both arguments featured a prominent Basque dimension that remains underexplored in the historical literature.

This work examines the relationship between the Irish and Basque nationalist movements from 1895 to 1939, that is, from the period of increasingly vigorous Irish cultural revival, and the beginnings of Basque nationalism as a socio-political movement until the end of the Spanish Civil War and the infancy of the constitutionally-reformed Irish state (1937) under Éamon de Valera's Fianna Fáil government. I take relationship herein to mean points of ideological exchange and influence, as well as instances of personal interactions and the dynamics thereof. Indeed, historian María Eugenia Cruset defines Basque-Irish relations in the 1920s as 'personal' in character rather than 'institutional', a general characterization that I would apply to the entirety of the period considered in this thesis.[16] Accordingly, this work affords much attention to the individuals and personal relationships that linked Ireland and the Basque Country.

The two nations had much in common. At the turn of the century, they were both small sub-state entities, with primarily Catholic populations, and were increasingly anxious about the decline of their distinct cultures and languages. Basque and Irish nationalist narratives recounted centuries of resistance against Spain and Britain, respectively, and both sought a return to an idealized past in which they enjoyed unfettered liberty. We will see many commonalities throughout, but this work is not primarily concerned with comparing the two as case studies. At times, Basque and Irish nationalists themselves drew parallels between the two nations, and these cases certainly matter insofar as they reflect their contemporary understanding of each other, and by extension, informed their relationship. However, this thesis generally avoids a comparative approach *per se*, opting instead for something more meta-comparative in its attention to the comparisons drawn from 1895 to 1939. The central focus of this work is on the analysis of the dynamics of the Basque-Irish nationalist relationship and the nature

[16] María Eugenia Cruset, *Nacionalismo y diásporas: Los casos vasco e irlandés en Argentina (1862-1922)* (La Plata: Ediciones Lauburu, 2015), 88-89.

of the networks that connected people from both movements. Such an analysis ties into and draws upon several different historiographical streams.

First, there is a discrete body of Basque-Irish historical literature to which this study belongs. While there are a number of Basque-Irish comparative analyses,[17] there is also a growing body of work on the general 'Irish influence' in Basque nationalism. A very brief 1992 article by José María Lorenzo provides a basic overview of the influence of the Easter Rising and the activities of the most pro-Irish Basque nationalists.[18] Similarly, that same year, Xosé Manoel Núñez authored an article on the mythologization of the Easter Rising in the Basque, Catalan, and Galician nationalist movements. Much like Lorenzo, his focus is on the reception of the Easter Rising, though wider in scope with its attention to Galicia and Catalonia. The Basque-Irish analysis numbers only six pages, concisely covering events from 1916 to the Spanish Civil War.[19] In his 1996 dissertation on the history of Basque political violence, Cameron Watson remarked that the question of Irish influence was still "an under-appreciated theme in the historiography."[20] Watson dedicates a subsection to the nature of the Irish influence in Basque nationalism, suggesting "that the Irish experience allowed for a potential strategy of violence to enter the Basque nationalist imagination."[21] A 2002 article by Ander Delgado examines the Basque perception of the Irish Home Rule movement, which he describes as having strengthened the convictions of those who sought a return to foral (relating to the *fueros*) autonomy.[22] Two more notable relevant works appeared in 2017. Núñez returned to the

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[17] See for example John Bew, Martyn Frampton, and Iñigo Gurruchaga, *Talking to Terrorists: Making Peace in Ireland and the Basque Country* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Andre Lecours, *Basque Nationalism and the Spanish State* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007); Cynthia Irvin, *Militant Nationalism: Between Movement and Party in Ireland and the Basque Country* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

[18] José María Lorenzo Espinosa, "La influencia del nacionalismo irlandés en el nacionalismo vasco, 1916-1936," in *Nuevas formulaciones culturales: Euskal Herria y Europa*, 239-247 (San Sebastián: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 1992).

[19] Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, "El mito del nacionalismo irlandés y su influencia en los nacionalismos gallego, vasco y catalán (1880-1936)," *Spagna Contemporanea*, no. 2 (1992): 25-58.

[20] Cameron Watson, "Sacred Earth, Symbolic Blood: A Cultural History of Basque Political Violence from Arana to ETA" (PhD diss., University of Nevada, Reno, 1996), 303.

[21] Ibid., 334.

[22] Ander Delgado Cendagortagalarza, "El fuerismo, el Home Rule Bill y la política británica: el contexto internacional en los inicios del movimiento nacionalista vasco (1890-1903)," *Historia Contemporánea* 25 (2002): 304.

Basque-Irish relationship in a much-expanded article covering the years 1890 to 1939.[23] Furthermore, the fiftieth anniversary of the Bombing of Gernika was commemorated in Ireland with the publication of a collection of short essays on Basque-Irish topics.[24] Two relevant doctoral dissertations are forthcoming: "Gora Rebeldiak! The Basque Izquierda Abertzale - Irish Republican Movement Nexus, 1959 - 2011" by Niall Cullen and "El nacionalismo vasco y su correlato irlandés (1902-1932)" by Iñaki Vásquez.

Considering the Irish side of the equation presents a major difficulty. There is a fundamental disequilibrium in the Basque-Irish relationship in the sense that the Basques paid far more attention to the Irish than vice versa. While the founder of the Sinn Féin (Ourselves) movement, Arthur Griffith, found an example to follow in Hungary,[25] the Irish overall paid virtually no attention to the Basque nationalist movement until the Spanish Civil War.[26] This examination therefore assumes a largely episodic character, as it is necessary to focus on the few encounters of Basque and Irish nationalists.

Another means of approaching the Irish side of Basque-Irish affairs is through an analysis of Irish foreign policy as it relates to the Basques. Irish foreign policy is a flourishing field of study, and while Ireland's neutrality during the Second World War is frequently the centre of attention, there have been recent commendable efforts to explore the pre-1939 period. I have made use of Dermot Keogh's canonical *Ireland and Europe, 1919-1948* and Gerard Keown's *First of the Small Nations*. Beyond these there is the Royal Irish Academy's ongoing *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* project accessible online, and I have also drawn on consular and diplomatic archival sources for a detailed look at the Basque-Irish relationship from an Irish institutional perspective.

As a work that focuses on personal relationships and personalities, this thesis employs several biographical works. On the Irish side, Fearghal McGarry's work on Eoin O'Duffy,[27] and McGarry and Seán Cronin's respective biographies of Frank Ryan are

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[23] Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua, mitos rebeldes: El nacionalismo vasco e Irlanda (1890-1939)," *Historia Contemporánea* 55 (2017): 447-482.
[24] *Gernika Then and Now: 80 years of Basque-Irish anti-fascist struggles*, ed. Gernika 80 Committee (Dublin: Gernika 80 Committee, 2017).
[25] See Arthur Griffith, *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland*, 1904; Furthermore, see David Haglund and Umut Korkut, "Going Against the Flow: Sinn Féin's Unusual Hungarian Roots" *The International History Review* 37, no. 1 (2015): 41-58, for a study with a serious focus on transnationalism or 'policy transfer'.
[26] Cruset, *Nacionalismo y diásporas*, 204.
[27] Fearghal McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy: A Self-Made Hero* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

particularly relevant.[28] On the Basque side, José María Lorenzo's work on Eli Gallastegi served as a key source of information on this figure who brought Ireland and the Basque Country much closer together.[29] Historians of Basque-Irish relations are sorely lacking information on one crucial link between the two nations in the early-twentieth century—Ambrose Victor Martin. To remedy this gap in the academic literature, I have drawn upon unreleased documentation in the private possession of the Martin family, generously shared to the great benefit of this research.

Furthermore, this research can be taken as a case study in transnationalism. In 1993, Daniele Conversi briefly analyzed the impact of the 1916 Easter Rising on Basque nationalism within a theoretical examination of the so-called 'domino effect' that 'successful nationalisms' exert internationally. He explains that "a supposed domino effect can only have an impact if some specific internal factors are present. Examples of liberation movements worldwide merely serve to reinforce already pre-existing trends and do not bear immediate consequences on the likelihood of secession in faraway states."[30] As we will see, this understanding holds true for the examples surveyed herein. The internal dynamics of Basque or Irish nationalism must take precedence in the consideration of a potential external influence. This is especially salient in episodes such as reception of the Easter Rising amongst the Basque nationalist community, or the impact of the Spanish Civil War on domestic Irish politics.

At the same time, the historical study of nationalism lends itself to the danger of isolated analysis. The ideological features of a given nationalist movement are sometimes treated as wholly native developments which can be understood within the confines of borders. This has been a preoccupation of scholars for some years now—reflected in the so-called 'transnational turn' in the academy—and while this thesis does not pretend to break any theoretical ground, the exposition that follows could be situated within a broad

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[28] Fearghal McGarry, *Frank Ryan* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2010); Seán Cronin, *Frank Ryan: The Search for the Republic* (Dublin: Repsol, 1980).

[29] José María Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari, una pasión útil: Vida y obra de Eli Gallastegi (1892-1974)* (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1992); Readers may also be interested in biographies on other important figures within this work, including Éamon de Valera, Peadar O'Donnell, and Sabino Arana. See Ronan Fanning, *Éamon de Valera: A Will to Power* (London: Faber & Faber, 2016), Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Peadar O'Donnell* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), and Elías Amézaga, *Biograf a sentimental de Sabino Arana* (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 2003).

[30] Daniele Conversi, "Domino effect or internal developments? The influences of international events and political ideologies on Catalan and Basque nationalism," *West European Politics* 16, no. 3 (1993): 245.

body of historical writing that effectively internationalizes nationalism. Both Basque and Irish historians have become increasingly aware of the value of transnational contexts in the analysis of nationalist movements. That there is a growing body of work on the Irish influence in Basque nationalism speaks to this attention. Several historians have similarly adopted a transnational approach to Irish nationalism in recent years.[31] The research presented herein will highlight multiple examples of how a nationalist movement can be affected by external forces, and how the reception of such forces can be shaped by the characteristics and internal dynamics of the nationalism in question.

Overall, this work aims to provide an overview of the Basque-Irish nationalist relationship from 1895 to 1939 and explain its characteristics, with attention to its evolving and multi-faceted nature. In Chapter One I analyze the ideology of the Basque nationalist movement prior to 1916 with a focus on its anglophilia (which necessarily complicated Basque sympathy for Ireland) and the factionalism that beset it, contextualizing the mixed response to the 1916 Easter Rising later on. Chapter Two looks at the Basque nationalist reaction(s) to the Easter Rising, the activities of a radical pro-Irish faction, and early Basque-Irish contacts on both a personal, informal level and on an institutional level after the government of the revolutionary Irish Republic began to propagandize in Spain in 1919. Chapter Three explores the Basque nationalist coverage of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Irish Civil War, and ongoing Basque-Irish contacts during the early years of the Irish Free State and in the midst of a repressive dictatorship in Spain. Chapter Four covers the years from 1930 to 1936, as Basque nationalists emerged from clandestinity with the advent of the Spanish Second Republic, and similarly, as many Irish republicans were rehabilitated with the victory of anti-Treaty leader Éamon de Valera's Fianna Fáil party. The period covered in this chapter offers a wealth of Basque-Irish contacts to discuss, as well as potent examples of how Irish nationalism reverberated in radical Basque nationalism. Finally, Chapter Five examines the Spanish Civil War as it was experienced

[31] Niall Whelehan, *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Róisín Healy, "Irish-Polish Solidarity: Irish Responses to the January Uprising of 1863-4 in Congress Poland" in *Transnational Perspectives in Modern Irish History: Beyond the Island*, edited by Niall Whelehan (London: Routledge, 2015), 149-164; Fearghal McGarry, "'A Land Beyond the Wave': Transnational Perspectives on Easter 1916" in *Transnational Perspectives in Modern Irish History*, 165-188; Maurice Walsh, *Bitter Freedom: Ireland in a Revolutionary World 1918-1922* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015).

in the Basque Country, and how the conflict as a whole became embroiled in Irish politics. There was a strong Basque dimension to the reception of the Spanish Civil War in Ireland, and I argue that a Basque civil war became entangled with the unsettled legacy of the Irish Civil War.

The following general points can be made about the relationship between the Basque and Irish nationalist movements from 1895 to 1939: First, the most fruitful contacts between Basque and Irish nationalists were those of a personal and 'unofficial' variety. While we will see that there was some indirect relationship between the leadership of Sinn Féin (and later Fianna Fáil) and the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV—Basque Nationalist Party), it was generally unproductive and limited to hollow rhetoric of solidarity. Second, relations were often the product of pragmatism or convenience rather than ideological affinity; the respective factions in contact were not always analogous. Third, the internal dynamics of Basque and Irish nationalism were sometimes prejudicial to mutual sympathy and solidarity. The notion that Basque and Irish history, and their respective nationalist movements, are 'parallel' is above all constructed, and they were by no means always thought of as such.

CHAPTER ONE
Ireland and Basque Nationalism, 1895-1916

"Los «fenianos» no son otra cosa que la fracción más avanzada de la tendencia revolucionaria del Nacionalismo irlandés: los terroristas del nacionalismo."

Luis Eleizalde, 1914[32]

The Characteristics of Early Basque Nationalism

The Basque province of Biscay experienced industrialization at a disorientating pace following the Second Carlist War (1873-1876).[33] The defeat of the Carlist insurgents spelled an end for the *fueros* and "home-rule institutions" across the Spanish Basque Country.[34] The city of Bilbao and the surrounding area was the main stage for liberal economic development, based primarily on the burgeoning iron industry. A massive influx of immigrants was needed to power the industrial engine of Biscay, effectively tripling the population of Bilbao in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The middle class suffered as a result of the drastic social and economic transformation, small businesses went bankrupt, and independent labourers were absorbed by the gargantuan proletariat.[35] The retreat of Basque language and traditional culture was accelerated by industrialization in Biscay, causing an acute preoccupation amongst a small number of Basque regionalists.

Amidst these rapid changes, seventeen-year-old Sabino Arana began to independently study the history of his native Biscay, encouraged by his older brother who had planted the idea in his mind that Carlism—a reactionary monarchist movement with strong roots in the Basque Country—was counterproductive and that the Basque people

[32] "The Fenians are nothing but the most advanced faction of the revolutionary tendency of Irish nationalism: the terrorists of nationalism;" Luis Eleizalde, *Países y razas: las aspiraciones nacionalistas en diversos pueblos (1913-1914)* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1999 [first ed. 1914]), 173.
[33] Some refer to this conflict as the Third Carlist War, though most scholars do not count the 'Carlist War' of 1847-1849.
[34] Joseba Agirreazkuenaga, *The Making of the Basque Question: Experiencing Self-Government, 1793-1877* (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, 2011), 224.
[35] Marianne Heiberg, *The Making of the Basque Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 42-43.

were in fact not Spanish at all.[36] Arana continued to study and write, which culminated in the 1892 book *Bizkaia por su independencia* (Biscay Through Its Independence), the publication of which could be said to mark the beginning of Basque nationalism as a socio-political movement.[37] There are several points to clarify regarding the content of this nascent ideology. At this point, Arana's program sought foremost the independence of the province of Biscay, with no pretension to representing the six other provinces comprising the Greater Basque Country (a term for which he developed a neologism—'Euzkadi').[38] Biscay, a nation by its own right, was to join in a confederation with the other Basque provinces, "fraternal peoples by natural ties of race, language, character and customs."[39] When Arana founded the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* (PNV—Basque Nationalist Party) in 1895,[40] its programme made clear that the Basque confederation was to be on a voluntary basis, and that each province would "retain their traditional absolute independence."[41] By 1897, Arana's movement had shifted from Biscayan to Basque nationalism,[42] though its Biscayan character was still apparent.[43]

Second, while competence in the Basque language was important (though Arana himself was not a native speaker), primacy was afforded to ethnic background in Arana's conception of 'Basqueness'. In a statement also demonstrating his aversion to Basque-Catalan comparisons, he wrote:

> The Catalans would like not only themselves to speak Catalan but all the other Spaniards established in their region as well; for us it would be our

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[36] Javier Corcuera Atienza, *The Origins*, *Ideology, and Organization of Basque Nationalism, 1876-1903*, trans. Albert Bork and Cameron Watson (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, 2006), 117-118.
[37] Ibid., 125.
[38] The Greater Basque Country comprises seven provinces in total. Biscay, Gipuzkoa, Araba, and Navarre are in Spain. Zuberoa, Lower Navarre, and Lapurdi are in France.
[39] Sabino Arana, *Bizkaitarra* no. 8, (Apr. 22, 1894), in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 267.
[40] Technically, an organization that would later call itself the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco*.
[41] Stanley Payne, *Basque Nationalism* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1975), 73.
[42] Cameron Watson, *Modern Basque History: Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, 2003), 191.
[43] For example, the *ikurriña* which became generalized for the Basque Country, was originally designed to represent Biscay only (and interestingly, according to some, based on the design of the Union Jack!). The red background was taken from the Biscayan crest. The Saint Andrew's cross was included because the feast day of Saint Andrew coincided with the mythologized Battle of Arrigorriaga (840) between the Biscayans and the Leonese. It was coloured green for the Tree of Gernika, symbolizing the fueros of Biscay. The Tree of Gernika came to represent 'Basque fueros' which historically never existed uniformly. The white cross was for God. See Sabino Arana "La cruz de San Andrés," *Bizkaitarra* no. 17 (Nov. 30, 1894) in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 409-414.

> ruin if all the *maketos*[44] resident in our territory spoke *Euskera*. Why? Because the purity of race is, like language, one of the fundamentals of the Biscayan banner, while language, as long as there is a good grammar and dictionary, can be restored even if nobody speaks it; race, on the other hand, cannot be revived once lost."[45]

Spanish immigration and inter-mixing with Basques was the root cause of the spiritual and moral degeneration of Biscay, according to Arana, who encouraged a passive hostility towards foreigners: "The Biscayans are just as obligated to speak their national language as they are to not teach it to the *maketos* or Spaniards. It is not the speaking of this or that language, but the difference of language, that is the great means of preserving ourselves from the contagion of the Spaniards and avoiding the mixing of the two races."[46] "If some Spaniard were, for example, drowning in the estuary, screaming for help, answer: *Nik estakit erderaz* [I don't speak Spanish]."[47] However, William Douglass rightfully observes that there was nothing exceptional about Sabino Arana's racism, remarking that in the era of European scientific racism, the notion of a Basque 'race' was "a creation more of the intellectual circles of Paris and Stockholm than Basque (or Spanish) ones."[48]

Third, the profound religiosity of the PNV was reflected in its official motto—*Jaungoikua eta lagi-zarra* (God and the Old Laws), inspired by the Carlist motto *Dios, rey, patria y fueros* (God, king, country, and fueros). The centrality of the Catholic component in the movement cannot be understated. The first programme of the PNV clarified that *Jaungoikua*, God, had precedence over *lagi-zarra*, the Old Laws.[49] The state was to be guided completely by the Church. Arana's articulation of Basque nationalism was "radically theocratic," as described by Stanley Payne, and profoundly inspired by the Society of Jesus (founded by Basque priest Ignatius Loyola), according to Antonio

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[44] An Aranist neologism and derogatory term for Spaniard.
[45] Sabino Arana, "Errores Catalanistas" *Bizkaitarra* (Oct. 31, 1894), in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 404.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Sabino Arana, "Naskaldija. Fruto," *Bizkaitarra* no. 29 (Jun. 30, 1895), quoted in Corcuera Atienza, *The Origins, Ideology, and Organization of Basque Nationalism*, 221.
[48] William A. Douglass, "Sabino's Sin: Racism and the Founding of Basque Nationalism," in *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, ed. Daniele Conversi (London: Routledge, 2002), 102.
[49] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 73.

Elorza.[50] The Jesuit influence, claims Elorza, imbued Aranist nationalist discourse with a certain militantism.[51]

For the first few years after its foundation in 1895, the PNV grew at a disappointingly slow rate. It struggled to spread its influence outside of Biscay, and the government suppressed the party by banning its publications, arresting several members for 'rebellion' (including Arana), and criminalizing the posting of the *ikurriña*, the flag designed by Sabino and his brother Luis.[52] However, an influx of members in 1898 invigorated the small group, who ran candidates in the Bilbao municipal election in the following year and won five seats of a total thirty-five.[53]

A lesser component—but relevant here—of Basque nationalism at this point was its strong anglophilic tendency. In 1902 Sabino Arana wrote shortly before his death: "Our victory appears to me certain and close: The independence of the Basque Country, under the protection of England, will be a happy fact in the not-too-distant future."[54] Interestingly, he was not the first to articulate this idea. In 1756, Basque Jesuit Manuel Larramendi described in his utopian (proto-)nationalist work *Sobre los fueros de Guipúzcoa* a fictional scenario in which a delegation from London is sent to the Basques to offer protection in their war of independence against Spain and France. The envoy offered military protection and equal treatment for Basques under British law.[55] Arana did not know of this work, but it demonstrates that Britain, seen as Spain's eternal enemy, quite naturally represented an 'enemy of my enemy' for Basque nationalists.

The Boer War (1899-1902) served to bring this anglophilia to the fore of Basque nationalist discourse. The first issue of the PNV press organ, *Euzkadi* reported on the conflict in March 1901. Arana wrote that while the people of Europe were in favour of the Boers, he was resolutely in favour of Britain. "Have the Boers," he asked, "respected the

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Antonio Elorza, *Un pueblo escogido: Génesis, definición y desarrollo del nacionalismo vasco* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2001), 187.
[52] Corcuera Atienza, *The Origins, Ideology, and Organization of Basque Nationalism*, 262-263, 272-275.
[53] Ibid., 194-195.
[54] Ibid., 357.
[55] Manuel Larramendi, *Conferencias curiosas, políticas, legales y morales sobre los fueros de la M.N. y M.L provincia de Guipúzcoa* in *Sobre los fueros de Guipúzcoa: Obras del padre Larramendi*, ed. Jose Ignazio Telletxea Idigoras (Donostia: Argitalpen eta publikapenen gipuzkoar erakundea, 1983), 55.

negros like they want to be respected by the English?"[56] "They're in it for pure transvaalism, or more precisely, for anglophobic fury: for hate of the English, not for love of Transvaal."[57] Another author chimed in: "Us Basques today have no reason to fear nor hate England. On the contrary, England is the constant and traditional enemy of the Latin race, our enemy."[58]

A recurring theme in Basque nationalist discourse was to compare English rule favourably to Spanish rule. Arana asked whether anyone had ever considered that "the occupation of Transvaal by the English is less unjust and odious for the Boers than Spanish domination is for those who suffer it."[59] The 'enemy of my enemy' logic employed by Basque nationalists was also familiar to their Irish counterparts. In Ireland, the Anglo-Boer conflict provided a literal battleground for militant republicans to fight the English. Arthur Griffith, the future founder of Sinn Féin (Ourselves), was a central figure in the Irish Transvaal Committee, which sent about 300 volunteers in the so-called Irish Brigade to South Africa to support the Boer forces.[60] By the war's end in 1902 most of the Irish volunteers were either on the run or dead. Arana responded happily to British victory, writing a telegram to the British Prime Minister: "Basque Nationalist Party congratulates British Majesty for ending South African war, wishing that these people find advantages under the gentle yoke of Great Britain."[61] Such sentiment seems contrary to Arana's own anti-imperialism, but, like later Basque nationalists, he may not have even considered Britain to be imperialist (rather, its empire was better considered a 'confederation').[62]

In the Irish and British context, Sabino Arana saw the Irish Home Rule movement as proof of the virtue and tolerance of Great Britain, or at least of British liberalism. The Home Rule movement sought the (re-)establishment of a devolved Irish parliament, still

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[56] *Euzkadi* no. 1, Mar. 1901 in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 1971.
[57] Ibid., 1973; Furthermore, Donal McCracken writes: "A further and somewhat more tangible component of the Irish pro-Boer movement was anglophobia. Irish and Boer attitudes to the English were undoubtedly similar, as the English and those associated with them were their common enemy" in *Forgotten Protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer War* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Society, 2003), xvii.
[58] Iturain (pseud. Luis Eleizalde), "Bóers y boerofilos" *La Patria* no. 10 (Dec. 29, 1901).
[59] Sabino Arana, "El seudo-africano pueblo bóer" *Euzkadi* no. 4 (Dec. 1901), in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 2007.
[60] Donal McCracken, "MacBride's Brigade in the Anglo-Boer War," *History Ireland* 8, no.1 (Spring 2000): 26-27.
[61] Corcuera Atienza, *The Origins, Ideology, and Organization of Basque Nationalism*, 464; The telegram was ultimately never sent.
[62] See the end of this chapter.

linked to the United Kingdom. The centuries-old Irish parliament had been dissolved in 1801, following the Acts of Union in 1800.[63] While Irish Catholic public opinion was generally not opposed to the Union at the time—seeing a better opportunity to pursue Catholic Emancipation in a united parliament—there had been a strong pressure to restore the Irish parliament since the beginning of the 'Repeal of the Union' campaign in the 1830s.[64] In 1886, while Sabino Arana's ideas about Basque nationalism were at an embryonic stage, the First Home Rule Bill introduced by Liberal British Prime Minister William Gladstone was defeated in the House of Commons. To make matters worse, the campaign for Home Rule was further damaged by a public scandal surrounding the adulterous relationship of Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and his death shortly thereafter in 1891.[65]

While remaining a staunch anglophile, Arana nonetheless supported Irish Home Rule. In 1894, following the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords, Arana called the pro-Home Rule William Gladstone, an "illustrious defender of the rights of Ireland."[66] One weekly paper of nationalist inclinations published an article in 1897 that compared the Basque Country and Ireland: "The history of Ireland presents many points of similarity with the history of the Basque Country. In other times, both lived in happiness under their own laws, which both lost due to expansionist and assimilationist politics, and ever since then their misfortunes have been increasing."[67] However, the article noted some lamentable differences—the Basques had no Irish Parliamentary Party or Charles Stewart Parnell of their own. "In the Basque Country the exact opposite takes place; no unity, no firmness of ideas; its deputies so complacent with the leaders of Spanish parties that they become agents of official business with no care for the aspirations of their country."[68]

Sabino Arana wrote a scathing response to the article, evidently seeing more in common between Basque and Irish nationalism:

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[63] Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (London: Penguin, 2000), 159.
[64] Ibid., 152-157, 187.
[65] Ibid., 405-412.
[66] *Bizkaitarra* (Feb. 28, 1894), in *Obras completas de Arana-Goiri'tar Sabin*, 244-245.
[67] "¡Dios proteja á Euskaria!," *Euskalduna* no. 43 (Jul. 4, 1897).
[68] Ibid.

> The only similarity left out, and which is undoubtedly the most important, is that the Irish party calls itself nationalist and aspires to make Ireland independent, and there exists here [in the Basque Country] a party also calling itself nationalist with identical aspirations. This paper then says that in Ireland there exists a union of wills, contrary to what is happening in the Basque Country. Fraudsters!! Do your heads not hang with shame? Here there is a party with the same name and same aims as the Irish patriots.[69]

The notion that Ireland was an example to be followed was articulated repeatedly in Basque nationalism in the years to come. In 1895, in the context of the slow gestation of the Basque nationalist movement, an article described "the apathy which one notes currently amongst the youth of Biscay for all things noble and elevated," in contrast to "all other oppressed peoples, [where] the youth are always the most exalted and decisive patriots: amongst the Polish, the Czechs, the Romanians, the Irish…everywhere. Everywhere except here in Biscay and the whole Basque Country."[70]

However, attention to events in Ireland at this point was infrequent, and sympathy with the Irish cause passed first through the filter of anglophilia. For example, leading up to the coronation of Edward VII in 1902, Irish nationalist pamphlets were disseminated throughout Liverpool amongst the Irish diaspora calling for a boycott of royal celebrations, reminding them of the 1798 Rebellion, the Penal Laws, and the Famine. One Basque nationalist periodical responded in an article titled "Liberty in England": "A most telling testimony of the ample liberty that Great Britain's present state of law grants to its citizens [...] How many good things Spain could learn!"[71] Ignoring the content of the propaganda, they used the opportunity to praise Britain for permitting the distribution of the pamphlets. This rhetoric continued for decades and is an unignorable dimension of the Basque perspective of Ireland. Indeed, one of the figures praising the British during the Boer War, Luis Eleizalde, bitterly condemned the Easter Rising fifteen years later.

England, or Great Britain generally, was to remain in the minds of many Basque nationalists a paragon of virtuous governance, much as Basque proto-nationalist Manuel Larramendi had believed in 1756. Around the turn of the twentieth century, support for the aspirations of Irish constitutional nationalists seemed compatible with an appreciation

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[69] "¡Dios proteja á Euskaria!," *Baserritarra*, no. 11 (Jul. 11, 1897).
[70] *Bizkaitarra* (Jan. 20, 1895).
[71] "La libertad en Inglaterra," *La Patria* no. 36 (Jun. 29, 1902).

for the British state. We do not see, for example, simultaneous praise for Great Britain and Fenian dynamiters. Nonetheless, there is a stark irony in the parallel support for further Irish autonomy and Sabino Arana's vague idea—albeit of unknown popularity—of British Protectorate status for the Basque Country. In this period, the Basque nationalists' grasp of Irish history seems limited, and more serious study may have complicated their idea of 'the gentle yoke of Great Britain', a term surely not used by many Irish nationalists.

Sabino Arana died in 1903 from Addison's disease. Toward the end of his life, Arana came to the conclusion that for progress to be made, the Basque nationalist movement would need to compromise by seeking autonomy within the Spanish state, instead of outright independence. The dying king split his realm in two, causing a rift between those who supported the shift to autonomism and the doctrinal purists who convinced themselves that Arana was either compelled in prison, while deliriously ill, to renounce separatism, or that it was a clever ruse to avoid prosecution.[72] Historian Cameron Watson notes that the shift was probably inspired by the more pragmatic Catalan nationalists who founded the *Lliga Regionalista* (Regionalist League) in 1901.[73] Those who supported working within the Spanish political apparatus would later cite the Irish example of Daniel O'Connell working within the British Parliament as justification.[74]

Factionalism in the Basque Nationalist Movement and Attention to Ireland

While the moderate autonomists exercised more control over the party, the hardline independentists remained a force to be reckoned with. Sabino Arana's brother Luis remained a key figure in the movement and refused to accept the policy change; Sabino's chosen successor as party leader, Angel Zabala, likewise did not embrace autonomism. The most radical tendencies of the movement, however, were concentrated in the youth sectors. Already by 1904, the members of the *Sociedad de Juventud Vasca* (Society of

[72] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 81; Corcuera Atienza, *The Origins, Ideology, and Organization of Basque Nationalism*, 354-355.
[73] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 96.
[74] Alexander Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco (1890-1939): Historia, pensamiento y relaciones internacionales* (Bilbao: Instituto Vasco de Administración Pública, 1996), 163.

Basque Youth) numbered some 400.[75] The party as a whole continued to grow but remained divided between two broad tendencies. All the while, references to Ireland continued in Basque nationalist discourse.

The official press organ of the PNV from 1906 to 1908 was *Aberri* (Fatherland), which loosely represented the orthodox tendency. *Euskalduna*, not officially linked to the PNV but closely tied to its moderate base, supported the compromise of autonomy.[76] Only one article in *Aberri*, a weekly publication, discussed Ireland, vaguely calling on Basque nationalists to emulate the heroism of Daniel O'Connell.[77] Conversely, reportage on the exploits of Polish nationalists was fairly common during these same years.[78] Ireland had evidently yet to eclipse other nationalities in terms of press coverage or interest amongst the Basque nationalists of *Aberri*.

Euskalduna, on the other hand, referenced Ireland several times during this decade. In a 1903 article, they discussed Hungary, Poland, Norway, and Ireland as potential 'examples'. Regarding the Irish, the article read: "Ireland fights bravely against the British state, [but] as long as they enact the revolutionary principles of that terrible fenianism they will accomplish nothing [...] With Redmond [Ireland] moves toward this liberty, coming to see the attainment of Home Rule in the not-distant future."[79] In an article titled "Parallel," they compared the Acts of Union in 1800 to the loss of the *fueros* in 1839.[80] This camp was firmly in favour of Irish constitutional nationalism, though saw its applicability in the Basque Country as limited due to major contextual differences—"there they live under a regime of sensible liberty, there the law prevails, and here we live under

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[75] Nicolás Ruiz Descamps, *Historia de las organizaciones juveniles del nacionalismo vasco (1893-1923)* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2012), 51.
[76] Ludger Mees, "El nacionalismo vasco entre 1903 y 1923," *Euzko Ikaskuntza, Cuadernos de Sección, Historia-Geografía 17* (1990): 119-120; Ruiz Descamps, *Historia de las Organizaciones Juveniles del Nacionalismo Vasco*, 64; *Euskalduna* formally disassociated with the PNV in December 1907.
[77] Karakatxa, "El caciquismo," *Aberri* no. 111 (Jun. 27, 1908).
[78] For examples see: Martín de Anguiozar (pseud. Ramón de Berraondo), "Polonia y Vasconia," *El Pueblo Vasco* (Dec. 1906), in *Aberri* no. 33 (Dec. 15, 1906); Ikurpen, "El derecho y la fuerza," *Aberri* no. 52 (May 11, 1907); L. M. "Del amor á la Patria," *Aberri* no. 58 (Jun. 22, 1907); "Naskaldija: Niños en huelga" *Aberri* no. 73 (Oct. 5, 1907); "Alemania contra los polacos," *Aberri* no. 85 (Dec. 28, 1907) (a reproduced article from another publication); "Los polacos," *Aberri* no. 92 (Feb 15, 1908); "La ley contra Polonia," *Aberri* no. 98 (Mar. 28, 1908).
[79] "Ejemplos," *Euskalduna* no. 318 (Dec. 27, 1903).
[80] X., "Parallelo," *Euskalduna*, no. 483 (Mar. 2, 1907).

an oppressive regime, and law is written to serve as an instrument of the whim of whoever applies it."[81]

In the last analysis, treatment of Ireland in this decade was infrequent, less prominent than other 'examples', and not outstanding in tone. Practical lessons to be derived from contemporary Irish nationalism seemed limited, so the Basque nationalist press emphasized more generically the spiritual struggle and ardent patriotism of historical figures in the pantheon of Irish patriots. Cruset says of this period: "In the stage after Arana's death, it was the most radical sectors of the party that delved into the example of Ireland."[82] This would be true somewhat later, though in at least the first few years after 1903, the evidence suggests that it was actually the less radical sector of the party that paid more attention to Ireland. On a general level, historian Xosé Manoel Núñez's analysis of Basque attention to Ireland in this early period is fair: it was "sporadic," and "from a prism of generic solidarity, for Ireland being an oppressed nationality and mostly Catholic."[83]

Meanwhile, youthful radicalism and discontent with the status quo festered. In July 1907, a PNV commemoration at the tomb of Sabino Arana in Sukarrieta, the first of many organized by the orthodox nationalists, was later recalled as one of the most important days in the life of Elias (Eli) Gallastegi, then only 14 years old, who would soon become a principal figure in radical Basque nationalism, as we will see throughout this work. Gallastegi subsequently joined *Euzko Gaztedija* (Basque Youth), which was closely tied to the creation of *Mendigoxale Bazkuna* (Mountaineers' Assembly), the confederation and formal political integration into the PNV of previously informal and separate mountaineering youth groups, in 1908.[84] The *mendigoxales*, or mountaineers, possessed a militant zeal, and guarded Aranist orthodoxy; their rural retreats were later to become veritable paramilitary training exercises, though at this point they were primarily symbolic in their rejection of 'urban sin' and romantic search for the authentic Basque soul in the countryside.[85]

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[81] "El Partido Nacionalista Irlandés," *Euskalduna* no. 511 (Sep. 14, 1907).
[82] Cruset, *Nacionalismo y diásporas*, 218.
[83] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 454.
[84] Watson, "Sacred Earth, Symbolic Blood," 268.
[85] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 153-154; Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 97; The young Basque mountaineers were in fact quite similar to scouting movements across Europe. In Ireland,

In 1913, the PNV unofficially renamed itself *Comunión Nacionalista Vasca* (CNV—Basque Nationalist Communion) in an effort to present itself as having moved away from the original doctrine of Sabino Arana and as a 'movement' rather than a political party.[86] The cleft between the orthodox/radical tendency and the reformist moderates continued to grow, and tensions were exacerbated by the outbreak of world war in 1914. Most 'radicals' supported Germany, while the *comunionistas*, dictating the 'official' position of Basque nationalism, backed the Allies with a special fixation on England. An article from the early stages of the war titled "Glory to England" elucidates the party line:

> The politics of all the great powers, with the exception of one, Great Britain, are inspired by imperialism. [...] The only country—glory be to it!—among the belligerent great powers, that is not imperialist, is Great Britain. It was [once] imperialist; today it is not. All of its colonies are autonomous, because it has come to understand that there is a force greater than imperialism: nationalism. Its colonies possess free parliaments that issue laws, and even—and this is amazing—legislate on customs. With its ex-colonies, Great Britain forms a confederation of states. And see how, in the current circumstances, its children turn freely and spontaneously to help their mother![87]

While the Basque nationalists in neutral Spain clashed over which side to nominally support in the First World War, Ireland was forced to make more serious decisions.[88] Some 210,000 Irishmen voluntarily fought in the war, a figure which includes Protestants and Catholics from across the island.[89] In fact, Home Rule leader John Redmond's paramilitary 'Irish Volunteers' were overwhelmingly in favour of the British war effort. Though as the Fenian saying went, 'England's difficulty' with the Axis powers could serve as 'Ireland's opportunity'. As the most militant Irish nationalists began smuggling in weapons from Germany, the rift between moderate and radical, like in the Basque

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Na Fianna Eireann (Warriors of Ireland) was, like its many counterparts, "a manifestation of the cult of discipline, training and manliness that grew out of the menace of the coming war, but also, perhaps, a reaction to the widely perceived *fin-de-siecle* decadence"— ideologically very similar indeed to the *mendigoxales*. See Marnie Hay, "The foundation and development of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909-16," *Irish Historical Studies* 36, no. 141 (May 2008), 53.

[86] Santiago de Pablo and Ludger Mees, *El péndulo patriótico: Historia del Partido Nacionalista Vasco, 1895-2005* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), 57.

[87] Euzkeldun-bat, "Gloria á Inglaterra," *Euzkadi* no. 600 (Sep. 26, 1914).

[88] However, the war had devastating consequences for the Basques in France. See Watson, *Modern Basque History*, 227-229.

[89] John Horne, "Ireland and the 'Greater War'," in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, ed. John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, and Mike Murphy (New York: NYU Press, 2017), 204.

Country, was evidently deepening, though in Ireland the stage was set for an armed confrontation. On April 24, 1916, when an uprising began in Dublin, one of its most eager audiences was to be found in the Basque Country.

CHAPTER TWO
God, the Old Laws, and Revolution, 1916-1922

"¡Jagi, jagi, euzkotaŕak,
lasteŕ datoŕ eguna!"

Evaristo Bustinza, 1915[90]

"Our day will come yet, believe me."

Michael Davin, 1916[91]

The 1916 Easter Rising and Basque Nationalism

In 1915, the PNV expelled Luis Arana—the most authoritative old-guard independentist—in part due to his germanophilia during the war.[92] In 1916, the party name-change to CNV was made official, definitively marking the ascendancy of the moderates. It was, in a sense, the culmination of years of tension between the autonomist and independentist camps, which had been at odds since 1898, yet it marked the beginning of tensions more hostile than ever before. With news of the 1916 Easter Rising reaching Bilbao, the radicals of *Euzko Gaztedija* looked to Ireland as a role model. In fact, scholar Jon Juaristi relates a story from his grandfather—one of the founders of the youth organization—that Eli Gallastegi, radical nationalist *par excellence*, organized a volunteer corps to travel to Dublin to fight the British Army. Of course, the wishful expedition never materialized, because the fighting was over within a week, well before preparations could be finalized.[93]

The Easter Rising, then, arrived at a key moment in the history of Basque nationalism. Historian Oliver O'Hanlon claims that "[c]overage of Irish affairs in the

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[90] "Arise, arise, Basques, the day will come soon!;" The beginning of a song by Evaristo Bustinza (often known by his pen name *Kirikiño*) titled "Jagi, jagi, euzkotarrak" featured on the cover of many issues of *Aberri* during this period. See Nicolás Ruiz Descamps, "Música y nacionalismo vasco: La labor musical de Juventud Vasca de Bilbao y el uso de la música como medio de propaganda política (1904-1923) *Musiker* 17 (2010): 180.

[91] Michael Davin is a fictional Irish nationalist character based on George Clancy, a friend of James Joyce. Clancy would later become the Mayor of Limerick; James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Penguin, 2003 [first ed. 1916]), 220; And in other words, as more commonly said by Irish republicans today: "*Tiocfaidh ár lá*."

[92] de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 59-64.

[93] Jon Juaristi, *El bucle melancólico: Historias de nacionalistas vascos* (Madrid: Espasa, 1998), 211.

Spanish press was largely confined to regions that were favourable to Irish independence, such as Catalonia, the Basque region, and Galicia."[94] However, contrary to what one might expect, the Basque Country was by no means generally 'favourable to Irish independence'. The reaction of the CNV to events in Dublin was predictable, given their anglophilia. In their press organ *Euzkadi*, the CNV covered the insurrection as it unfolded from Monday, April 24 to Sunday, April 30. On April 26, they reported that the 'German plot' (a reference to the rebels' attempts to secure German support) was soon to be put down by British General John Maxwell, "a military man of great intelligence and energy."[95] They quoted Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond and various British officials, assuring readers that most Irish people did not support the rebellion.

However, it is evident that there was a hard-to-ignore pressure within the movement to back the Irish rebels. The director of *Euzkadi* and one of the key ideological leaders of Basque nationalism at the time, 'Kizkitza' (Engracio Aranzadi), wrote on May 25: "That there are Basque nationalists who applaud the fenian movement condemned by Redmond and his 80 deputies is incomprehensible. That these Basque nationalists, allied with the eternal enemies of the Basque fatherland [Germany], face and fight us, proclaiming that we have betrayed our flag by siding with Redmond and Irish nationalism, is inexplicable."[96] The debate continued a few days later, with Aranzadi sarcastically characterizing the radical Basque hibernophiles as having come to the conclusion they too ought to form "a nucleus of anarchist patriots like that of [James] Connolly and the Irish [...] going out onto the streets shouting 'long live free Euzkadi!' and killing the agents of authority and the military."[97]

As José María Lorenzo notes, we do not know much about the position of radical Basque nationalists prior to 1916.[98] The only somewhat-reliable medium of expression they had was *Euzko Deya* (1916-1923), the press organ of a Basque language promotional body created by *Euzko Gaztedija*.[99] This marginal monthly publication only began in 1916, and since the opinions of the more radical youth members of the party

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[94] Oliver O'Hanlon, "Press Coverage from Abroad," in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, 481.
[95] "General inglés á Irlanda," *Euzkadi* no. 1173 (Apr. 26, 1916).
[96] Kizkitza (pseud. Engracio Aranzadi), "Ante la revolución irlandesa," *Euzkadi* no. 1201 (May 25, 1916).
[97] Kizkitza (pseud. Engracio Aranzadi), "Ante la revolución irlandesa," *Euzkadi* no. 1204 (May 28, 1916).
[98] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 58.
[99] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 220.

were not welcomed in the official publication(s), we have little evidence of their positions. The youthful dissidents found a means of expression later in 1916 with a new weekly publication by *Euzko Gaztedija*: *Aberri*, taken from the name of the earlier official PNV journal *Aberri* (1906-1908). From this point we can speak of the *aberriano* movement within Basque nationalism, defined in no small part by its pro-Irish orientation. Technically, they remained a part of the CNV, but represented a dissident tendency that party officials sought to reel in. The movement was born from the young ranks of the movement, whose discontent with the direction of the PNV/CNV was exacerbated by its critical response to the Rising. Eli Gallastegi was a chief ideological influence within this faction, and its most outstanding hibernophile. As we have seen, Basque nationalists had drawn parallels with Ireland prior to 1916 somewhat sporadically, but the birth of the *aberriano* movement inaugurated the consistent tendency to use Ireland "as a symbolic prism through which events in the Basque Country were refracted."[100]

One of the most serious confrontations between the radicals and moderates came about through their responses to the execution of fifteen of the Irish 'rebel leaders' in May 1916. Luis Eleizalde wrote in *Euzkadi* that "Pearse, one of the executed leaders, counted on the support of the masses and 'gallant allies in Europe'. This poor patriot, who was one of the intellectuals of Sinn Féin, gives the impression of an almost demented fool."[101] Even more infuriating to the hibernophile radicals were the defamatory articles on the late Roger Casement by Engracio Aranzadi. Casement had first entered their field of view during the Easter Rising, when the CNV referred to him as an 'agitator' and an 'enemy of England and the Irish'.[102] The radicals had given much attention to Casement, referring to him as a 'patriot martyr' and held mass for him after his execution.[103] Eli Gallastegi,

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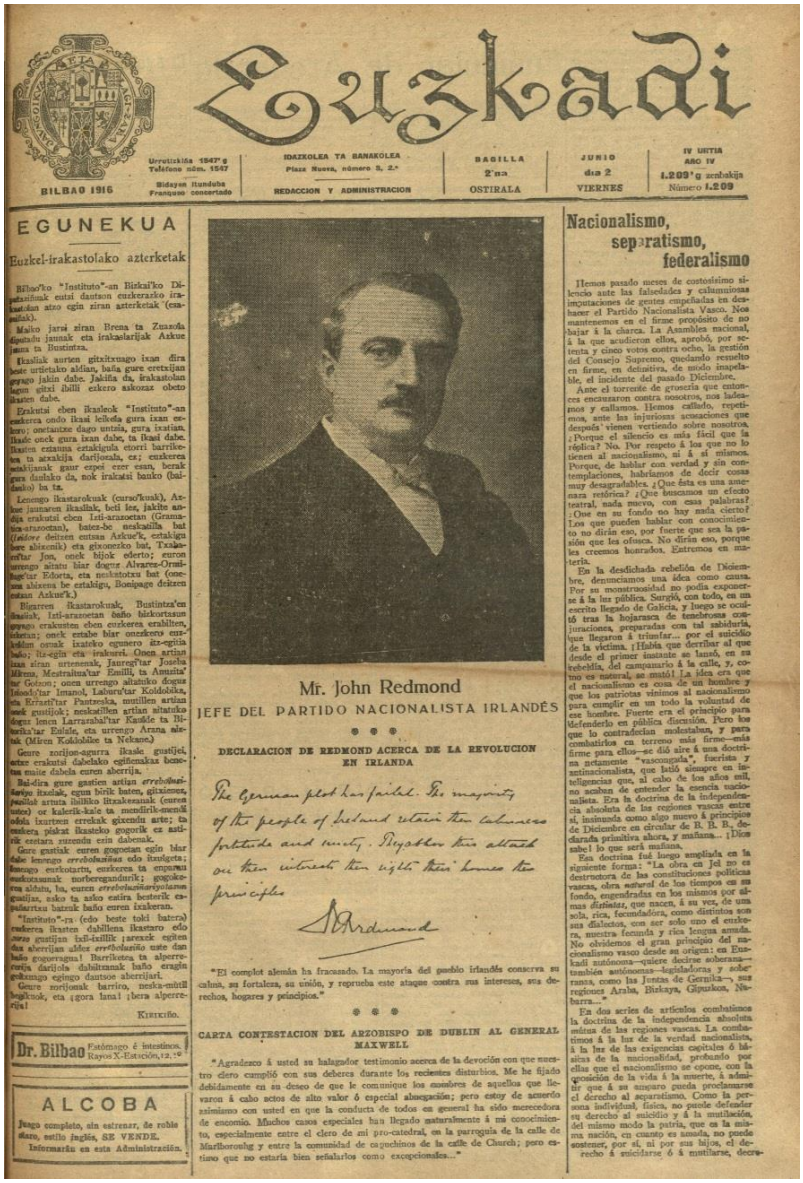
[100] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 119.
[101] Axe (pseud. Luis Eleizalde), "Actualidad irlandesa," *Euzkadi* no. 1185 (May 9, 1916).
[102] "El intento de desembarco de armas en Irlanda," *Euzkadi* no. 1173 (Apr. 26, 1916).
[103] Ruiz Descamps, *Historia de las organizaciones juveniles del nacionalismo vasco*, 86-87; Roger Casement was a leader of the paramilitary Irish Volunteers, who had been working in Berlin prior to the Rising to secure German weapons and aid. Casement was arrested by the British two days before the Rising, and a German arms shipment was intercepted. The loss of the German guns was devastating enough that Eoin MacNeill, Chief-of-Staff of the Volunteers, attempted to call off the Rising with the infamous 'countermanding order'. The order was followed by members of the organization in most of Ireland but went ahead in Dublin. See Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising, Ireland: Easter 1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 105, 117.

then serving as the representative of *Euzko Gaztedija* on the editorial board of *Euzkadi*, demanded a retraction of one particularly insulting article. The CNV denied the request.[104]

Figure 2: A front cover of the CNV-run journal *Euzkadi*, with an image of John Redmond and a quote from him, denouncing the Easter Rising (Jun. 2, 1916)



Euzkadi

BILBAO 1916

EGUNEKUA

Euzkel-irakastolako azterketak

ALCOBA

Mr. John Redmond

JEFE DEL PARTIDO NACIONALISTA IRLANDÉS

DECLARACION DE REDMOND ACERCA DE LA REVOLUCION EN IRLANDA

CARTA CONTESTACION DEL ARZOBISPO DE DUBLIN AL GENERAL MAXWELL

Nacionalismo, separatismo, federalismo

[104] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 56-58.

Evolving Basque Opinions of Irish Nationalism

Discussion of Ireland in the following years continued. Furthermore, comparisons were made between Ireland and the Basque Country by both *aberrianos* and *comunionistas*. Luis Eleizalde—one of the chief ideological influences within the CNV—was perhaps more hostile to Ulster unionism than he was to the 'sinn-feiners'[105] (calling it 'violent' and 'hypocritical'). He wrote an article in 1917 titled "The Basque Ulster," denouncing the 'traitorous' anti-autonomy Basque Liberals: "Our Ulster is not, like the Irish one, localized in a given region, but spread throughout the Basque Country."[106]

As Irish public opinion shifted in favour of the rebels, so too did the opinion of the CNV.[107] While Arthur Griffith's Sinn Féin party had no part in the Easter Rising (contrary to the reportage by *Euzkadi*), it quickly became a political movement that comprised members of the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (a physical force republican organization founded in 1858, whose members were commonly known as 'Fenians').[108] By 1917, Sinn Féin had become "a truly national movement."[109] In the Irish general election of 1918, the overwhelming national desire for political independence was expressed with the resounding victory of Sinn Féin at the polls. Of the 105 seats to be held in the British parliament, Sinn Féin won 73, unionists 26, and the Irish Parliamentary Party a mere 6.[110]

On January 21, 1919, in accordance with the abstentionist policy of the party, elected Sinn Féin members of parliament convened in Dublin, rather than London, to inaugurate Dáil Éireann, an underground Irish Assembly, a notional government that issued a declaration of independence and claimed jurisdiction over all 32 counties of Ireland. Coincidentally, that very date marked the beginning of the Irish War of Independence (or 'the Anglo-Irish War') (1919-1921), with the killing of two officers in the

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[105] Both the *aberrianos* and the *comunionistas* made the common mistake of ascribing responsibility for the Easter Rising to Sinn Féin.
[106] Axe (pseud. Luis Eleizalde), "El Ulster vasco," *Euzkadi* no. 1669 (Jul. 22, 1917).
[107] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 119.
[108] McGarry, *The Rising*, 19.
[109] Charles Townshend, *Ireland: The 20th Century* (London: Arnold, 1999), 83.
[110] Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913-1923* (New York: Overlook, 2015), 184.

Royal Irish Constabulary by members of the Irish Volunteers (soon to be known as the Irish Republican Army), acting on their own initiative.[111]

Coverage of the Irish War of Independence in the pages of *Euzkadi* no longer carried sharp denunciations of the 'sinn-feiners'.[112] Both moderates and radicals took the opportunity to point out similarities between Ireland and the Basque Country. *Euzkadi*, in a distinctly Spanish analogy, referred to the loyalist element in both Ireland and the Basque Country as 'loyal moors', that is, troops of the colony who serve the empire.[113] However, they remained more optimistic about the Basque Country, claiming that while the Ulster unionists could not muster "more than ten thousand determined volunteers," there were not even *ten* Basques who would willingly die for Spain, which was as historically ignorant and inaccurate as it was wishful.[114]

Notwithstanding the shared pro-Irish feeling in this period, tensions between the *aberrianos* and the CNV peaked. On July 23, 1921, roughly two weeks after the Anglo-Irish Truce that effectively ended the Irish War of Independence, Eli Gallastegi—then president of *Euzko Gaztedija*—was expelled from the party along with several other prominent youth leaders.[115] On September 4, they formed a political party, reclaiming the name of the PNV.[116] No longer constrained by the CNV, the radical *aberrianos* could now laud the Irish war effort against the British with unprecedented vigour:

> The final step of Irish nationalism has truly been a fast race towards victory. Since Sinn Féin threw itself on the path of heroism on Easter Week 1916, the Irish have had only three avenues: exile, revolt, and slavery; and Ireland, as a dignified and virile people, chose the most glorious route, that of revolution. [...] Basque nationalists, today representing the most ancient race in Europe—the only civilized one which still remains subjugated—filled with joy by the triumph of liberty and justice in Ireland, enthusiastically congratulate the Irish people, model of heroism and love of the nationalist ideal, and pray that Ireland attains eternal prosperity and absolute independence. LONG LIVE FREE IRELAND![117]

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[111] Townshend, *Ireland*, 87.
[112] H. Smith, "Una evasión célebre," *Euzkadi* no. 1547 (Mar. 13, 1919); D., "Armonía entre la fe y el patriotismo," *Euzkadi* no. 2241 (Apr. 9, 1919).
[113] Similar to how ETA would later refer to the *Ertzaintza*, the Basque autonomous police force, as *zipaioak* (sepoys).
[114] "Los moros leales del Ulster y de Euzkadi," *Euzkadi* no. 2243 (Apr. 11, 1919).
[115] Iñigo Camino and Luis de Guezala, *Juventud y Nacionalismo Vasco: Bilbao (1901-1937)* (Bilbao: Fundación Sabino Arana, 1991), 89-90.
[116] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 105.
[117] "El estado libre de Irlanda," *Aberri* no. 46 (Dec. 17, 1921).

In the same issue, *Aberri* announced that *Euzko Gaztedija* had invited "a notable publicist resident in Ireland," known for his enthusiasm for Sinn Féin, to give a talk in the Basque Country on the political situation in Ireland following the War of Independence.[118]

The Basque Dimension of Irish Foreign Affairs in Spain

Dublin-based Spanish writer Ricardo Baeza arrived in Bilbao in late 1921 and was erroneously introduced as a supporter of Sinn Féin.[119] In reality he was a staunch critic of Éamon de Valera, President of the Sinn Féin government, unbeknownst to the radical Basque nationalists.[120] Baeza had written of the 'Irish tragedy' that "it suffices them [Sinn Féin] to know on what side England is, so they can take the opposite. If England is on the right, Ireland is on the left. As England often is correct, this leads Ireland frequently to error." Baeza was in fact unable to comprehend why they wanted to leave Britain in the first place, remarking that "a discredited England would be fatal for the moral economy of the planet," and that no other country could have exercised global hegemony more virtuously.[121]

The newly-founded Irish delegation in Madrid angrily contacted Manuel (Manu) de la Sota (often known by his pen name *Txanka*), prominent *aberriano* and son of the famous Basque industrialist and moderate nationalist Ramón de la Sota. Ireland's 'Press Agent' in Madrid Máire O'Brien wrote: "It would give me much satisfaction to be there face to face with Mr. Baeza at this platform in Bilbao, or any other platform, and personally hear the mean and despicable lies with which he has tried to dirty the name and reputation of President de Valera. Unfortunately I must deny myself this satisfaction given my position here."[122]

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[118] "Homenaje de Juventud Vasca a Irlanda," *Aberri* no. 46 (Dec. 17, 1921).
[119] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 465.
[120] Ricardo Baeza, "La intransigencia de Edmundo de Valera," *El Sol* (Dec. 25, 1921).
[121] Ricardo Baeza, "Otra vez en Irlanda" (Dublin, 1921) in *Hermes: Revista del País Vasco, Bilbao 1921-1922* (Bilbao: Idatz Ekintza, 1988), 248-249.
[122] Letter from Máire O'Brien to Manuel de la Sota (Dec. 25, 1921) in Ricardo Baeza, *La isla de los santos: Itinerario en Irlanda*, eds. Laurie-Anne Laget and Eduardo Hernandez Cano (Montblanc: Igitur, 2010), 195-196.

At this point, the Irish republican underground government was beginning its propaganda efforts on the continent. Spain as a whole was a relatively low priority for them, and their knowledge of Basque affairs was limited. Some basic foreign affairs decisions were made at a ministry meeting in March 1921 at which the Sinn Féin government organized propaganda campaigns across Europe. Their bureau in Germany was to be run at an estimated annual cost of £1000,[123] and their agent in Paris was paid a yearly salary of £500, yet in Spain, there was no 'official' ambassadorial mission, and their 'Press Agent' was paid a comparatively meagre £250.[124] Máire O'Brien arrived in Madrid on April 30, tasked with finding a building suitable for a base of operations.[125]

In a letter to the Sinn Féin Publicity Department on September 17, 1921, Máire O'Brien indicated that she had been in touch with a prominent member of the CNV: "Do you think you could supply the material for the articles requested by Senor de le Sota [sic]."[126] O'Brien was sent copies of the *Irish Bulletin*, a publication produced by the Department of Propaganda, as well as *Freeman's Journal*, *Young Ireland*, and *Daily News* to disseminate.[127] She wrote on September 20, 1921, that "De la Sota's paper 'Euzkadi' gets the Bulletin. I will see that De la Sota himself gets copies. I know that he will make good use of them."[128] Ramón de la Sota, one of the wealthiest industrialists in Spain, had been the head of the early autonomist camp that joined the PNV in 1898, and was a strong anglophile (to the extent that he received the Order of the British Empire for his aid to Britain during the war). He was the father of Manu de la Sota, the prominent *aberriano* who received an angry letter from Máire O'Brien around this same time. The Irish propagandists seem to have had little understanding of this radical pro-Irish faction, and they might have benefitted from cultivating more serious ties.

The Irish Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Robert Brennan, was instructed by de Valera to "maintain regular correspondence with our representatives and with our

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[123] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/97(1).
[124] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/128(1); However, both President Éamon de Valera and Minister for Finance Michael Collins were of the opinion that this amount was low and were prepared to double it if requested.
[125] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/128(1).
[126] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/61/3.
[127] NAI DFA EARLY SERIES 1/128(1).
[128] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/61/3.

friends in foreign countries, and to supply them with pamphlets and statistics as a foundation for informative articles upon Ireland."[129] Brennan noted in September 1921 that Manu de la Sota had called him and was "most enthusiastic in the Irish cause," though they never met personally.[130] It is a distinct possibility that Brennan furnished the young *Txanka* with materials that informed the many articles on Ireland in *Aberri*, or that he obtained them indirectly from his father, who received them from O'Brien.

Máire O'Brien sent back cuttings from papers throughout Spain to the Dáil's Publicity Department. She noted that "the provinces give us a good deal of publicity especially Barcelona and the North. The Madrid papers do very little for us but we must only worry them until they do."[131] This batch probably contained material from *Euzkadi*, but there is no evidence that O'Brien even knew of *Aberri*. The only sample of Spanish press cuttings sent back to Dublin that I could locate contained nothing from any Basque nationalist periodical.[132]

George Gavan Duffy, a key figure in Irish foreign affairs, had recommended that O'Brien carry out her work in Barcelona.[133] Before establishing a permanent base in Madrid, O'Brien had been in Catalonia conducting propaganda work. Gavan Duffy noted in March 1921 that "Miss O'Brien in Barcelona is well in with the Catalans and she says that the next best thing to disseminating the Bulletin in Spanish from Paris would be to do so from Madrid. She thinks the Catalan devotion to us would make them generally overlook the annoyance of getting their Irish news from Madrid."[134] While the Irish were more interested in Catalonia than the Basque Country, Brennan did note: "Attempt made and with certain success to confound Irish case and Irish movement with that of Viscaya [Biscay] and Catalonia, and even to represent the I.R.A. as akin to the Socialist and Anarchical party of Barcelona."[135]

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[129] Letter from Eamon de Valera to Robert Brennan (Feb. 28, 1921) quoted in Aengus Nolan, *Joseph Walshe: Irish Foreign Policy, 1922-1946* (Cork: Mercier, 2008), 15.
[130] *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, Vol. I, 1919-1922* (Dublin, 1998), Document 107 (Sep. 1921), http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/107.htm.
[131] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/61/3.
[132] NAI DFA/EMBASSY SERIES 1/73.
[133] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/61/3.
[134] *DIFP, Vol. I*, Document 63, letter from George Gavan Duffy to Robert Brennan (Mar. 5, 1921), http://www.difp.ie/docs/1921/Spain/63.htm.
[135] *DIFP, Vol.* I, Document 107 (Sep. 1921), http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume1/1921/107.htm.

Robert Brennan suggested that it would be "well to have Consuls if possible in Barcelona and Bilbao," but the Irish ultimately focused their efforts in Madrid.[136] And in any event, de Valera had stated with regard to 'Pro-Irish Organisations': "It would be well to have such organisations in every country. [...] There can be a general linking up of these later, but for Heaven's sake let us not have a plethora of over-lapping organisations in each country. Let us put [our] strength behind one in each and do our best to develop it."[137] They mistakenly committed to establishing a presence in Madrid, where they had little support.

The basic mission of the Irish publicity campaign in Europe was to counteract the rival British propaganda that worked negatively against them. Evidently, the British had a hard time winning this battle in the Basque Country; their embassy in Madrid exasperatedly complained that "there is undoubtedly constant communication between the sinnfeiners [sic] and the separatists in Catalonia and the Basque provinces, and nothing we can do will stop the separatist press in these two regions from publishing anti-English articles."[138]

A Young Irish Republican Comes to the Basque Country

While correspondence between radical Basque nationalists and the Irish government was minimal, in 1922 the *aberrianos* were to make contact with a figure who would become a longstanding link between the two nations. This story begins in neither Ireland nor the Basque Country, but in Argentina. On April 5, 1901, an unwed teenage girl gave birth to a son in monastery in Buenos Aires. Her mother, Mary Martin (née Daly), an immigrant from County Westmeath, Ireland, took responsibility for the boy—Ambrose Victor Martin.[139]

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[136] Ibid.
[137] NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/96/9.
[138] NA FO/371/7120, quoted in Nuñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 467.
[139] Documentation from the personal collection of Barra McFeely; NLI MS 13, 961/3/111; Legally, "Ambrosio Víctor" in Argentina, though I will use his English name, which he went by for most of his life. In the Basque press he often referred to as Ambrose Martin O'Daly. Martin must have occasionally tacked on his mother's maiden name, as is customary to do in Spanish.

There had been Irish people in Argentina since the seventeenth century, though this migration was little more than a trickle until some 45,000 emigrants left Ireland for Argentina over the course of the nineteenth century.[140] The Basques had a constant hand in the Spanish colonization of Argentina beginning in the sixteenth century. The best estimate for Basque emigration to Argentina (close to our period in question) claims that between 1840 and 1920, about 60,000 Basques came to Uruguay and Argentina (that is, the Plata and the Pampas).[141]

The family of Ambrose Martin resided in a small town in the province of Buenos Aires named Suipacha. Founded in 1864, from early on Suipacha was home to both Basque and Irish immigrant populations.[142] Nearby towns bear Basque names (Gorostiaga, Azcuénaga, Zarate) and Irish names (Duggan, O'Higgins, O'Brien), to name only a few, giving some indication of the character of this region. The young Ambrose Martin would have grown up alongside a politically active Basque diaspora, and this environment seems to have been an incubator for Basque-Irish solidarity.

In 1914, Ambrose Martin was sent to a boarding school in Mullingar, Westmeath, near where he still had relatives. Apparently, he took to the local culture quickly, joining Sinn Féin after the Easter Rising. He made a name for himself as a fiery orator and became involved with the IRA. His conspicuous profile caught the attention of the British authorities, who arrested him and imprisoned him in Liverpool.[143] He was deported to Argentina on May 15, 1919, just as the IRA's War of Independence campaign was developing.[144]

If it is any indication of the prominent friends he had made, while in prison, Martin was visited by Margaret Mary Pearse, the sister of Pádraic Pearse, who wrote a letter to his Irish wife afterwards to console her. He was already friends with Eamon Bulfin, a fellow Buenos Aires-born Irish patriot, renowned for supposedly having raised the green flag of

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[140] Cruset, *Nacionalismos y diásporas*, 95-96.
[141] Ibid., 109.
[142] Centro Vasco de Suipacha, "Vascos de Suipacha," http://vascosdesuipacha.blogspot.com/; The Southern Cross, "La presencia irlandesa en Suipacha," https://medium.com/@thesoutherncross/la-presencia-irlandesa-en-suipacha-68a5cf2bac1c.
[143] NLI MS 13, 961/3/111
[144] Letter from Margaret Mary Pearse to Margaret Harding Martin, personal collection of Barra McFeely.

the Irish Republic atop the General Post Office during the Easter Rising.[145] Furthermore, he was in close contact with Laurence Ginnell, who served as the first Sinn Féin Director of Propaganda in 1919, and was the first Irish representative in Argentina, appointed by de Valera in 1921.[146]

Martin first returned to his grandmother's house in Suipacha before becoming involved in republican political activity in the province of Buenos Aires. After nearly two years of propagandizing and fundraising, including a proposal to form an IRA reserve force in Argentina complete with regulation "Volunteer uniform" and training,[147] Martin headed back to Ireland in 1922, presumably upon hearing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty at the end of 1921. However, on his way back, he made a detour in the Basque Country. Martin would later claim that he was visiting 'old friends' there.[148]

Martin made clear that he was not Basque himself on one of the occasions where he was mistakenly introduced as such in Ireland, probably on account of his accent. "Although Mr. [Ernie] O'Malley mentioned that I was a Basque, I am not. I am an Irishman, and my connection with the Basques was something similar to his own," he declared many years later.[149] This seems to rule out a genetic connection—his biological father, for instance, if he knew anything of him. There is also evidence that Martin had a reading knowledge of Basque.[150] If he could in fact read the letters he received that were written in Basque, his exposure to the language must have been considerable.[151]

In any case, it is interesting that one of the most significant manifestations of Basque-Irish solidarity bore roots across the Atlantic Ocean. Some sources refer to Martin

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[145] Barra McFeely, personal correspondence; Moreover, Bulfin allegedly arranged an arms shipment for the IRA from Argentina in 1916. See Cruset, *Nacionalismos y diásporas*, 103.

[146] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 466; Dermot Keogh, *La independencia de Irlanda: La conexión argentina* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Universidad del Salvador, 2016), 291.

[147] Documentation from the personal collection of Barra McFeely.

[148] "A Dublin meeting," *Irish Independent* (Nov. 6, 1936).

[149] Ibid.

[150] Letter from [Jesus] Urkidi to Ambrose Martin (Jun. 26, 1932), personal collection of Barra McFeely; Though once he said to a Basque crowd: "I do not feel powerful in speaking your ancient language, so I am going to proceed in Spanish." Nevertheless, he concluded his speech with the de facto Basque national anthem, for which he received a hearty applause. See Edozein, "Actos de afirmación nacionalista. El Señor Martín O'Daly, en Zornotza," *Euzkadi* no. 6081 (Jun. 22, 1932).

[151] As a non-Indo-European language (though with a fair amount of Romance lexical borrowings) Basque is fundamentally unlike Catalan, for example, in that for a Castilian-speaker to even derive a basic sense from it would require concentrated exposure/study.

at this point as a 'leader' of Sinn Féin.[152] This would be arguably an overstatement of his role; Martin was far from a senior figure in the movement overall, but his charisma and zeal made him known to several key personalities. He might have been a fairly notable figure within the Irish republican community in Argentina, but at this point, the young Martin was by no means famed back in Ireland. *Aberri*, of course, did not diminish his stature. On the front page, it advertised on March 31, 1922:

> Tomorrow, Saturday, the 1st of April, an interesting patriotic act in commemoration of the heroes of the Easter Week in Dublin and all the Irish patriots who have dedicated their lives to the nationalist ideal will take place in the halls of the [*Euzko Gaztedija*] of Bilbao.
> A young Irish personality, of high profile in the modern nationalist movement, soul of the valuable patriotic organizations that he personally founded in South America, inadvertently finds himself among us, recently arrived from the capital of the Plata.
> On his way to his dear Ireland, he took the attention to visit our Basque Youth, and before taking leave from us, would like to leave us a pleasant memory of his brief stay in the metropolis of Basque nationalism.
> This distinguished Irish patriot—who has been imprisoned in an English jail for defending Ireland—about whose personality we cannot be any clearer, will warmly address all nationalists resident in Bilbao.
> In this conference he will explain the history of the Irish nationalist movement since this admirable people proclaimed the independent Republic of Ireland.
> GO, PATRIOTS, TO LISTEN TO THIS MAN WHO HAS LIVED THE MOST SUBLIME HOURS OF IRISH NATIONALISM![153]

Martin made an overwhelmingly positive impression on the radical Basque nationalists, who wrote in the next issue of *Aberri*:

> Never before have we seen our patriotic youth as impassioned as last Saturday, fascinated by the fiery speech of the most eloquent Irish orator who honoured the podium of [Euzko Gaztedija].
> For the space of an hour and a half he held us in suspense with his captivating words—ignited with love for his wretched Ireland—this young Irish patriot that has risen before us, vibrant and mysterious, to show our dispirited race the only path to salvation for peoples who aspire to their liberty.
> With his moving, prophetic, and suggestive voice, he gave us an emotional account of the tragic epic of Ireland the glorious, which found in the patriotism of its children a mysterious and irresistible force that drives them against the enemy race, against the deadly, cunning, and dominating race,

[152] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 322; Cruset, *Nacionalismos y diásporas*, 88.
[153] "Gran acontecimiento patriótico," *Aberri* no. 62 (Mar. 31, 1922).

> with such decisiveness and force, that will make us see very soon the resurrection of its national body.
> In his brief stay here, on the way to his homeland, this young patriot—a character of steel—did not rest a single moment from the propagation of the ideals of the Irish Republic, of which he is a selfless and valiant defender.[154]

Martin's most influential speech in the Basque Country was on the following Monday, April 10, in which he spoke about the role of Irish women in the nationalist struggle.[155] This day marked the foundation of *Emakume Abertzale Batza* (EAB—Association of Patriot Women), inspired by the Irish republican women's group *Cumann na mBan* (League of Women). Within its first month, EAB counted a membership of over 200.[156]

Figure 3: A drawing of Ambrose Martin on the cover of *Aberri* (May 19, 1922)

[154] "Conferencias patrioticas," *Aberri* no. 63 (Apr. 7, 1922).
[155] *Aberri* no. 64 (Apr. 15, 1922).
[156] Sara, "¡Unámonos, mujeres!," *Aberri* no. 67 (May 6, 1922).

Aberri and the Irish Influence

As we will see, this visit in 1922 sparked a lasting and fruitful friendship between Ambrose Martin and Eli Gallastegi, then serving as president of *Euzko Gaztedija*.[157] But on a broader level, it deepened the (radical) Basque nationalist fascination with the Irish example. Most often it was a positive example, contrasted with the 'apathy' of the Basque public at large. Ireland was a nation that had been 'awoken' while the Basque Country remained dormant. However, we ought to be careful about how we characterize the nature of the 'Irish influence'. Historian Gaizka Fernández states that

> the *aberrianos* took Sinn Féin as a model, the formation linked to the IRA. The influence of this movement on the PNV-Aberri is perceptible on different levels. On one hand, in the rejection of participating in democratic institutions. On the other, in the importance given to counting on branch organizations, for which *Aberri* formed a women's association [EAB], and developed the pre-existing theatre groups and the [*mendigoxales*]. It thereby configured itself as a party-community. A final aspect in which radical Basque nationalism was inspired by Irish republican movement was the importance it gave to propaganda, violence, self-sacrifice, and the cult of prisoners and martyrs as a means of making political gains.[158]

While in these cases it is fair to say that the Basque nationalists were inspired by their Irish counterparts, it should also be made clear that these were not novel concepts imported into Basque nationalism. While Irish republican abstentionism was lauded by many Basque nationalists, the PNV already had a tradition of abstaining from the general elections,[159] and Sabino Arana had claimed decades earlier that Biscay was technically never legally part of Spain. The general strategy of combining politics with cultural nationalist activities predated the fixation on Ireland that came after the Easter Rising. As mentioned earlier, the formal political integration of the *mendigoxales* occurred in 1908, and nationalist propaganda events included these as well as traditional dancers before 1916.[160] The use of prisoners and martyrs for political capital also had a well-established history within Basque nationalism. The original *Aberri* (1906-1908) regularly featured

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[157] Ruiz Descamps, *Historia de las Organizaciones Juveniles del Nacionalismo Vasco*, 59.
[158] Gaizka Fernández Soldevilla, *La voluntad del Gudari: Genesis y metástasis de la violencia de ETA* (Madrid: Tecnos, 2016), 67.
[159] de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 63.
[160] Camino and de Guezala, *Juventud y Nacionalismo Vasco*, 76-77.

appeals for donations for political prisoners and encouraged its readers to visit them. *Bizkaitarra* (1909-1913) also featured a list of political prisoners, their sentences, and visitation hours on the front cover of many issues.

The broader question of the Irish influence is best addressed by Núñez—it "must be understood, rather, as an external stimulus that brought about the crystallization of political tendencies and organizational inclinations nested in the *jelkide* [radical/orthodox] movement itself."[161] In tracing Irish 'influences' there is a potential danger of downplaying native developments within Basque nationalism, or overlooking broader trends in European nationalisms that transcend a Basque-Irish exchange. Ambrose Martin was remembered as playing some role in the foundation of EAB, but it is important to remember that the idea of *Cumann na mBan* was not entirely alien in the Basque Country, where women had already been playing a role in nationalist politics for years and paying attention to the Irish example well before Ambrose Martin arrived in Bilbao.[162]

Aberri concentrated on defending the nationalist orthodoxy—the 'original' teachings of Sabino Arana—and found a way to fuse this position with its ardent support of the Irish Revolution. What they took from a speech by Ambrose Martin was that "these two axes of Homeland and Liberty, and God and Faith, have been and will be in Ireland, like in the Basque Country, that which save them. Already, Sabino, the Master, with that clear vision, with that intuition, with that immortal love, taught us the way when he told us: he who does not love God is not a true patriot, but neither can you love God without being a patriot."[163] While the *aberrianos* found justification in the words of Arana for their backing of the Irish struggle against the British, the moderates found in the philosophy of the same man reason to laud England, even after the Irish Revolution: "England is a great people that Sabino taught us to love, and because Basque nationalism demands it, we are anglophiles. And because of the great affinity between the English and the Basque people."[164]

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[161] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 476.
[162] See Chapter 1 of the comprehensive work on the development of EAB: Mercedes Ugalde Solano, *Mujeres y nacionalismo vasco: Génesis y desarrollo de Emakume Abertzale Batza, 1906-1936* (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 1993).
[163] Adolfo de Larrañaga, "Un ejemplo. Por la Libertad y por la Patria," *Aberri* no. 63 (Apr. 7, 1922).
[164] Kizkitza (pseud. Engracio Aranzadi), "Euskadi, Inglaterra," *Euzkadi* no. 3375 (Sep. 9, 1923).

CHAPTER THREE
War and Exile, 1922-1927

"The sentimental and practical arguments urged by the Catalans in defence of their effort to set up a tiny six-county state it is not easy for an outsider to appreciate. On quite another plane are the claims of the Basques, beyond all doubt the oldest and easily one of the most interesting of the European peoples."

Fr. John Ryan, 1924[165]

The Irish War of Independence was finally settled, after a five-month truce, with the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. The delegation sent by Dáil Éireann to negotiate the treaty included Arthur Griffith and the iconic Michael Collins, veteran of the Easter Rising, Minister for Finance in the Dáil government from 1919 to 1922, and the last president of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The delegation, from which President Éamon de Valera was notably absent, signed the contentious treaty, which upheld the partition of the island into a 6-county loyalist entity in Northern Ireland and a 26-county state in the south, which was to be a Dominion within the Commonwealth.[166]

A civil war erupted in June 1922 from the so-called 'Treaty split', between a majority who supported the compromise of a 26-county 'Irish Free State', as it came to be called, and those who would not settle for less than a republic, as had been established in 1919. Michael Collins headed the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State in a war against the anti-Treaty insurgents politically headed by Éamon de Valera.[167]

Ambrose Martin returned to Ireland in April 1922, shortly before the outbreak of civil war. Ironically, Martin's inspirational speeches in the Basque Country on the near-mythic Irish struggle for freedom coincided with the very moment that the Irish nationalist movement was at its least inspirational, as it split into pro- and anti-Treaty factions. Martin supported the anti-Treaty camp, which would have significant repercussions later on.

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[165] John Ryan, "The New Era in Spain," *Studies* 13, no. 51 (Sep. 1924): 467.
[166] The British government passed the Government of Ireland Act in 1920, which provided for two separate Home Rule institutions: a parliament for six of nine Ulster counties (to ensure a Protestant majority), and a parliament for the other 26 counties of Ireland. Of course, this was too little too late for Irish nationalists.
[167] Michael Hopkinson, *Green Against Green: The Irish Civil* War (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988), 115-122.

Naturally, his Basque nationalist comrades followed the Irish Civil War (June 1922-May 1923) with interest. In March 1922, during the lead-up to the war, *Aberri* was well aware of the possibility of a civil conflict:

> While British imperialism continues the 'bulldog plan', clinging on to imposing its viewpoint on the Irish, whose nationalist ideal we love dearly, and we are enthusiastic admirers of the heroic Irish people, at the moment we must be content that the political talent of the leaders of Sinn Féin will find some other formula—like that of the last Sinn Féin assembly—that moves the wretched Ireland away from the most horrible tragedy of a people: civil war.[168]

The *aberrianos* resolutely supported the pact between Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins signed on May 20 that would have had the pro- and anti-Treaty wings of Sinn Féin running jointly in the general election, which the British government contested as a breach of the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.[169]

During the Irish Civil War, *Aberri* refrained from harsh condemnations of the pro-Treaty side and blamed the British above all. "We believe that the Anglo-Irish Treaty," an article in *Aberri* read, "will go down in history as the ultimate product of the cunning and intrigue of British imperialism."[170] They praised martyred anti-Treaty republicans: "Cathal Brugha! Harry Boland! And other anonymous heroes of Irish independence! Praise be upon you for having known what it is to die for the homeland, even dying at the hands of your own brothers, unconsciously turned into puppets of British imperialism." However, they added: "Arthur Griffith! Michael Collins! Mercy be upon you. We will not call you traitors and perjurers as some of your brothers have done."[171] Notably though, this article did not mention the death of Michael Collins, who had been killed in an anti-Treaty IRA ambush almost three weeks earlier (August 22, 1922).

Overall, *Aberri* did not frequently discuss the war as it unfolded. Lacking a strong stance and perhaps a reliable source of information, *Aberri* ran only a few articles on the conflict. At the end of the Irish Civil War, with a Free State victory, *Aberri* reported that "those who bear the most responsibility for the civil war that has ravaged Ireland during

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[168] Uritarte, "El problema irlandés," *Aberri* no. 60 (Mar. 18, 1922).
[169] Thomas Towey, "The Reaction of the British Government to the 1922 Collins-de Valera Pact," *Irish Historical Studies* 22, no. 85 (Mar. 1980): 65-76.
[170] U., "La tragedia de Irlanda," *Aberri* no. 84 (Sept. 9, 1922).
[171] Ibid.

these last 12 months are the English leaders, who obliged those of the so-called Free State to disarm the IRA, and who provided arms and munitions to the colonials, and seized countless shipments of arms and ammunition sent to the republicans by their North American compatriots."[172]

Eli Gallastegi, more radical than most rank-and-file *aberrianos*, saw in the Irish Civil War a mirror image of the same tensions within Basque nationalism, simply at a more advanced stage:

> We read daily in the press about new shootings of the so-called 'rebels,' 'separatists', of Ireland [Free State executions of captured IRA soldiers], the nationalists who do not want ties with the nation that drowned the life of their homeland in blood. They are the ones who die gloriously, completing the sworn oath for their honour. This development of life in Ireland is a prime example, now with more relevance than ever, that must be considered. [...] Don't you see it? There is already an organization, there are nationalists trained by them here, that fight separatism from now on, that demand and desire union with Spain, that support the movements of foral leagues, autonomists, against independentism; that unscrupulously attack those who they call 'separatists'. What will happen, then, when the fatal hour comes? Spain, one day, will concede ample autonomy to Catalonia, Galicia…to the Basque Country as well. The 'unionists' will therefore form a Basque army of 'regulars' armed by Spain, with whom they will fight, by blood and fire, without mercy, against the 'Basque separatist rebels'... And then, they themselves—our compatriots!—will shoot us. No exaggeration.[173]

Gallastegi's rivals in the CNV, his prophesized 'unionists' (though more akin to 'Free Staters' in his analogy), also took interest in the Irish Civil War. They maintained their admiration for England by pinning the central blame for violence in Ireland on Ulster, which was called in *Euzkadi* the "enemy of the southern Irish and semi-anonymous instigator of many of the vicissitudes that Erin bemoans in her misfortune."[174] Another article claimed that "the anti-Irish propaganda of the friends of the Ulsterites is in large part the cause of that which today so sadly occurs between the countrymen of Ireland."[175]

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[172] "Información del extranjero. Irlanda," *Aberri* no. 32 (Jul. 4, 1923).
[173] Eli Gallastegi, "Pascua revolucionaria. ¡Y un día nos fusilarán…!," *Aberri* (Apr. 1923) reproduced in Eli Gallastegi, *Por la libertad vasca*, ed. José María Lorenzo Espinosa (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1993), 204-205.
[174] Baron Von Goltz, "De Irlanda. Siguen triunfando las tropas leales," *Euzkadi* no. 3029 (Jul. 21, 1922).
[175] Baron Von Goltz, "Crónica extranjera. La guerra civil de Irlanda," *Euzkadi* no. 3028 (Jul. 20, 1922).

Worthy of mention is the fact that the editors of *Euzkadi* were still receiving news reports from the Irish propagandists in Madrid at the beginning of the Irish Civil War.[176] The first Irish Press Agent, Máire O'Brien, had resigned from her diplomatic post in Madrid due to her refusal to support the Anglo-Irish Treaty,[177] but the office continued its basic task, albeit with some difficulties. Ormonde Grattan Esmonde took charge in March 1922, but was frustrated with boredom and his lack of Spanish, reporting back to Dublin that "there is not enough work for two people in Madrid, and an Irish secretary is not necessary."[178] He wrote on September 20, 1922:

> Up to the middle of July, the publication of the Spanish Bulletin was continued; I noticed that *it was frequently quoted by the provincial press*, but rarely by that of the Capital. Owing to the state of affairs at home, it was necessary to deal mainly with Belfast and trade matters. I also wrote some twenty articles about Ireland, for different journals, mostly Catholic, in various parts of the country.[179]

The Irish press bureau in Madrid, aligned with the Treatyite Provisional Government, disseminated news via the *Boletín irlandés.* The CNV evidently received copies of this paper, which probably avoided much coverage of the Treaty split and the ensuing civil war, as Esmonde hinted at (though its publication ceased within the first month of the conflict). *Euzkadi* echoed much of the tone it was fed by the Irish propagandists. In fact, the moderate Basque nationalists uncritically reproduced large portions of text from the *Boletín irlandés* in their articles. Their coverage of the war between so-called 'loyal troops' and 'irregular troops' or 'rebels' differed even in its basic nomenclature from that of the *Aberri* radicals, who sarcastically employed such terms. Its major point of departure from the Irish propaganda, however, was its steadfast anglophilia. Through a critical fixation on Ulster, *Euzkadi* positioned itself in favour of the

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[176] They explicitly mention so in "Irlanda en guerra. Los rebeldes han solicitado la paz," *Euzkadi* no. 3030 (Jul. 20, 1922).
[177] Michael Kennedy, "'It Is a Disadvantage to be Represented by a Woman': The Experiences of Women in the Irish Diplomatic Service," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 13 (2002): 219.
[178] *DIFP, Vol. I*, Document 322, letter from Ormonde Grattan Esmonde to Desmond FitzGerald (Sep. 20, 1922), http://www.difp.ie/docs/1922/Spain/322.htm; "Mr Esmonde badly needs some-one who knows Spanish to help him" wrote George Gavan Duffy in a letter to Arthur Griffith, *DIFP, Vol. I*, Document 293 (May 27, 1922), http://www.difp.ie/docs/1922/Diplomatic-staff/293.htm.
[179] *DIFP, Vol. I*, Document 322, letter from Ormonde Grattan Esmonde to Desmond FitzGerald (Sep. 20, 1922); Emphasis mine.

pro-Treaty Irish nationalists and the British government, while remaining relatively forgiving of the anti-Treatyites.

In December 1922, amidst the Irish Civil War, the Irish Free State formally came into existence, and by May 1923 the anti-Treaty IRA had been defeated.[180] The Irish general election of August 1923 saw Éamon de Valera at the head of Sinn Féin, though incarcerated shortly before the vote when he emerged from hiding. The pro-Treaty wing of Sinn Féin split and formed a new party, Cumann na nGaedheal (League of the Gaels), led by William T. Cosgrave, which won the election, holding 63 out of 153 seats. However, their victory had been expected to be by a significantly larger margin—Sinn Féin's considerable 44 seats came as something of an embarrassment to the new government. Nonetheless, de Valera's anti-Treaty republicans abstained from the Free State Dáil, permitting Cosgrave to govern without opposition.[181]

Before the election, *Aberri* made clear that it supported de Valera, referring to him somewhat erroneously as the "illustrious leader" of the IRA. It was the noble defeat of the anti-Treaty forces that made them so exalted amongst radical Basque nationalists, who wrote that they "sacrificed their lives and peace for the sake of their national duty and honour, giving with their virile and heroic gesture a practical teaching to all the nationalists of oppressed peoples."[182] Despite the trauma of the Irish Civil War, *Aberri* still explicitly called the Irish republicans 'an example to follow':

> We have much to imitate from the Irish, we will need to struggle and suffer like them, but we have reason to have more hope. England, despite its power, cannot bring down young Ireland; do you think that Spain, a nation inferior to England in all aspects, could? Not at all. Well then, if Spain could not bring down this Ireland, let's be like Ireland, let's imitate those Irish, and triumph will be ours.[183]

'Triumph', however, as the *aberrianos* understood it, meant moral or spiritual victory. In no other sense of the word could anti-Treaty Irish republicans be considered triumphant

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[180] Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Pan Books, 2012), 35.
[181] Timothy O'Neil, "Reframing the Republic: Republican Socio-Economic Thought and the Road to Fianna Fail, 1923-26," in *A Formative Decade: Ireland in the 1920s*, ed. Mel Farell, Jason Knirck, and Ciara Meehan (Sallins: Irish Academic Press, 2015), 160; J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94-95.
[182] "En Euzkadi sobran hombres," *Aberri* no. 8 (Jun. 6, 1923).
[183] "Ejemplos a seguir. Irlanda y nosotros," *Aberri* no. 89 (Sep. 9, 1923).

in 1923. The Basque separatists were clear about this, proclaiming that "defeat is often convenient. Oh how Irish nationalism has learned, with its failures in some of its positions!"[184]

Aberri indicated in June 1923 that there were serious diplomatic plans for formal relations between the PNV and de Valera himself as 'President' of the notional Irish Republic. The article read that Laurence Ginnell (recently deceased, though they seem unaware of this) had arranged for them to be represented before de Valera by "a dear friend of ours," which almost certainly refers to Ambrose Martin.[185] However, Martin was in no position to represent the PNV in Dublin. He was allegedly "continually on the run" from the Free State authorities during this time and was incarcerated for an unknown duration in Athlone prison (County Westmeath) in December 1922. In fact, like thousands of other anti-Treaty IRA veterans, Martin emigrated after the civil war when the hope of establishing a republic seemed forlorn.[186]

Basque and Irish Nationalists on the Run

Martin's desire to leave Ireland coincided with an opportunity for another political adventure abroad. In September 1923, the Spanish government was overthrown in a military coup headed by Miguel Primo de Rivera. The new regime took little time in outlawing separatist parties; after a fleeting moment of toleration with heavy censure, *Aberri* ceased publication that same year. The PNV was forced underground, but the CNV was condoned due to its classification as a moderate regionalist party.[187] Martin arrived in the Basque Country at some time in 1924,[188] but his entry into Spain was reported to Spanish authorities by the British. "Some Basque nationalists," undoubtedly including his friend Gallastegi, sheltered Martin for a couple of months.[189] In late 1924, at a

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[184] Ibid.
[185] "En Euzkadi sobran hombres," *Aberri* no. 8 (Jun. 6, 1923); Solid evidence of this beyond simple deduction is that Martin would later style himself as a representative of the Basque government in Ireland. See "A Dublin Meeting," *Irish Independent* (Nov. 6, 1936).
[186] NLI MS 13, 961/3/111; Gavin Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class, and Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 207.
[187] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 121.
[188] Martin claims he left Ireland in June; NLI MS 13,961/3/111.
[189] Pere Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española: Nuevas perspectivas de estudio (PhD diss., Universitat de Barcelona, 2013), 55.

mendigoxale outing in the mountains, the Spanish police arrested some figures including "an official from the Irish 'Sinn Féin' army" and Gallastegi.[190]

By 1925 there was an Irish 'activist' named 'Ambrosi' (the Catalan equivalent of the name Ambrosio/Ambrose) hiding out in Paris, at the office of *Estat Català* (Catalan State), a radical Catalan separatist party exiled in France.[191] According to a firsthand Catalan source, Martin's stay was arranged by de Valera himself:

> [Éamon de Valera], with whom Francesc Macià was in personal contact, sent us a boy [who was] 'overly committed' in Dublin, who needed to stay far away from the British police for some time. Ambrosi (we never knew his surname) was a firm and strong boy, with irresistible energy and decisiveness [...] Ambrosi, though, took things a little too far. He proposed that we raise guards, as if it were effectively a military base. When we dissuaded him, he went on to say that, for security, he would go to sleep in the attic, from where he would guard the entrance of the building day and night. And so he did. One night, however, all of us and the whole neighbourhood were awoken by shooting that came from our attic. Ambrosi, shouting like a fool, almost convinced us that night that the Black and Tans [crown force counter-insurgents in the Irish War of Independence] had come to Bois-Colombes [Paris] to capture him and take him back to Ireland.[192]

Ambrose Martin became close friends with Francesc Macià, Catalan president in exile and founder of Estat Català, as well as fellow anti-Treatyite Leopold Kerney, then serving as the envoy of the underground Irish Republic in Paris.[193] Kerney's position was the source of much confusion, as it coexisted with the official diplomatic office of the Irish Free State, and the French had a hard time distinguishing them.[194] Macià, Kerney, and de Valera were all in close contact, a network which must also have included the young Martin to some degree.[195] Martin was able to provide his Catalan hosts with a monthly

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[190] Vibrant (pseud. Daniel Cardona), *Res de nou al Pirineu* (Barcelona: Nosaltres Sols!, 1933), 38, 71.
[191] Xosé Estévez, *De la Triple Alianza al Pacto de San Sebastián (1923-1930): Antecedentes de Galeuzca* (San Sebastián: Mundaiz, 1991), 473-474.
[192] Josep Carner-Ribalta, *De Balaguer a Nova-York passant per Moscou i Prats de Molló (Memòries)* (Paris: Edicions catalanes de París, 1972), 53-54.
[193] Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 55; Interestingly, this is also around the same time that Kerney later noted he met Eli Gallastegi for the first time, the circumstances of which he does not discuss. See NAI DFA 3/115/236. However, Gallastegi did visit his comrades of Estat Català, and his friend Ambrose Martin, in Paris on at least one occasion. Martin may have put him in touch with Kerney. See Vibrant, *Res de nou al Pirineu*, 38.
[194] Keogh, *First of the Small Nations*, 114.
[195] Joan-Carles Ferrer i Pont, *Nosaltres sols: la revolta irlandesa a Catalunya (1920-1923)* (Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat, 2007), 306.

copy of *Inis Fáil: Bulletin de la Ligue pour l'Indépendance de l'Irlande*, a Sinn Féin publication beginning in April 1925.[196] He also wrote a series of short essays for them on IRA tactics in the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War.[197] The Catalan nationalists might have consulted Martin's guides as they organized a guerrilla army to invade and 'liberate' Catalonia in November 1926, a plot which was ultimately discovered and suppressed by the French police.[198]

The situation of Irish propagandists in France was analogous to that in Spain. The capital, where they focused their efforts, was mostly barren soil, while the peripheral regions with sub-state nationalist movements were far more interested in establishing contact. Kerney reported back to de Valera from Paris in 1924: "There is no possibility of collecting funds here for the support of the Republican cause. You may remember that when the Republican Loan was floated, a whole-page advertisement was inserted in one of the leading papers here; as far as I know that costly advertisement did not bring us in a single franc."[199] Meanwhile, they had ardent supporters in Brittany,[200] and in Flanders, Belgium, for example.[201]

However, the republican propagandists had little interest in a serious relationship with any of these groups. Kerney wrote that he had "not sought close contact with Catalans, Flemings, and others who are outside the British Empire."[202] Their reaction to the 'League of Oppressed Nations' project is especially telling. The project was first envisioned by Basque nationalists, but credited to Francesc Macià, who proposed it internationally in September 1924. The stated purpose of this organization was to "bring to the international stage the plight of our struggles to attain liberty and freedom for our respective homelands," and it was to comprise Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, Ireland, Egypt, India, and the Rif Republic.[203] The Basque delegate for the League,

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[196] Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 55; Sinn Féin had become an exclusively anti-Treaty organization after the Treaty split.
[197] Ibid., 54-55.
[198] "1926 Complot de Prats de Molló: 600 guerrillers intenten alliberar Catalunya," *Llibertat* (Nov. 2006).
[199] Letter from Leopold Kerney to Éamon de Valera (Feb. 16, 1924), UCDA P150/1771.
[200] Justin Stover, "Modern Celtic Nationalism in the Period of the Great War: Establishing Transnational Connections," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 32 (2012): 297-298.
[201] Letter from Leopold Kerney to Éamon de Valera (Mar. 15, 1924), UCDA P150/1771.
[202] Letter from Leopold Kerney to Éamon de Valera (May 8, 1924), UCDA P150/1771.
[203] Estévez, *De la Triple Alianza al Pacto de San Sebastián*, 469.

Francisco de Gaztañaga, contacted de Valera to gauge his interest. De Valera wrote to Kerney:[204]

> Bearer, Francisco de Gastanaga [sic], has called on me with reference to the project of forming a "League of Oppressed Nations." I am very interested in the formation of such a League, and I wish you to attend, on our behalf, such preliminary conferences as may be held with reference to it. You will, of course, avoid all commitments until they are sanctioned by us here in express terms. I would like you to compile a concise dossier of data with reference to the "Independence" organisations in
>
> India
> Egypt
> Catalonia
> Euzkadi
> Morocco
> Philippine Islands, etc.
>
> showing the objects of these organisations, their several constitutions, their official Chiefs, etc. Much of this information can be got from their representatives in Paris.[205]

Kerney's response is unknown but can be largely deduced by de Valera's following reply:

> I dictate this hurriedly to let you know that I fully agree with your reasoning as to the inadvisability of linking up in a formal League with any oppressed peoples save those of the British Empire. Of course we sympathise with all, but a formal League is another matter.[206]

It might be said, therefore, that formal relations with any Basque nationalist organization on the part of de Valera's republicans were precluded. For a diplomatic mission of a state with no real existence, it was surprisingly pragmatic. It was ironic, but perhaps practical, that their interest in 'linking up' formally did not extend beyond the reaches of the empire from which they sought desperately to dissociate completely.[207]

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[204] Gaztañaga was, at the time, based in Hamburg for a short period as a Spanish teacher after narrowly escaping Spanish authorities in a round-up of Basque nationalists (Vibrant, *Res de nou al Pirineu*, 71). It was probably no coincidence that Ambrose Martin also ended up there briefly in 1925 (also teaching Spanish), facilitated by his Catalan contacts, according to Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 55.

[205] Letter from Éamon de Valera to Leopold Kerney (Sep. 9, 1924), UCDA P150/1771.

[206] Letter from Éamon de Valera to Leopold Kerney (Oct. 20, 1924), UCDA P150/1771.

[207] Relations with Indian nationalists had been deemed particularly important for a few years by this point. IRA veteran and anti-Treatyite executed by the Irish Free State, Liam Mellows, wrote from prison in 1922: "India. Isn't the time approaching when we should be in closest touch?" see Charles Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 368.

In May 1925, Eli Gallastegi, having already been arrested at least once alongside an Irishman of unconfirmed identity, was bold enough to host his bachelor party turned political rally in Bilbao, attended by over 500 people.[208] Invitees included his Catalan and Galician associates, and probably Ambrose Martin. The gathering was broken up by the police, with Gallastegi being detained and given a later court date to face a sentence of potentially twelve years in prison. In the meantime, he was forced to check in with the *Guardia Civil* every two weeks, but chose to flee with his family to the French Basque Country and then to Mexico, where he remained in exile for several years.[209]

Like many of his Basque comrades, Ambrose Martin also chose to leave for Latin America. In 1927, he arrived in Buenos Aires once again. Several key figures in *Estat Català*, including Francesc Macià, also left for Argentina in 1927.[210] Returning to his family village of Suipacha, Ambrose Martin set up a small café called the *Confitería Vasco-Irlandesa*, which he ran for a few years with little success.[211] The shared experience of being 'on the run' was perhaps one source of Basque-Irish solidarity going forward, particularly for Gallastegi and Martin.

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[208] Letter from Iker Gallastegi to Daniel Leach (2006). Courtesy of Daniel Leach.

[209] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 132-133; As an interesting and ironic point, the Spanish *Guardia Civil* was a point of reference for the Irish government in 1922 when it was in the process of creating the Garda Síochána. The Ministry of Home Affairs studied the *Mentor-Manual del Guardia Civil* (Guidebook of the Guardia Civil), a personal gift from the Director General of the Guardia Civil, Juan Zubia. See NAI DFA/EARLY SERIES 1/14/5.

[210] With immense difficulty in obtaining a visa from the Argentine embassy (Vibrant, *Res de nou al Pirineu*, 179-181); Josep Carner-Ribalta, *Macià, la seva actuació a l'estranger* (Mexico: Edicions catalanes de Mèxic, 1952), 94.

[211] Barra McFeely, personal correspondence.

CHAPTER FOUR
New Hopes and Hatreds, 1930-1936

"I wonder can our enemies know that by killing us they are creating a hundred thousand of us. History has told them that, Irish history more frequently than any other. They must never read history."

Frank Gallagher, 1920[212]

"Y Euzkadi hoy necesita persecuciones, sacrificios; gente dispuesta al sacrificio, a la muerte [...] Ejemplos abundantes y elocuentes nos ofrece la historia de Irlanda."

Eli Gallastegi, 1934[213]

Basque Nationalism and Spanish Politics

In Spain, Miguel Primo de Rivera resigned in January 1930, and King Alfonso XIII appointed General Dámaso Berenguer to continue dictatorial rule, though this short-lived regime was far milder. The Basque nationalists of *Aberri* quickly seized the opportunity to revitalize political activity and called for a reunification of the PNV and CNV in February.[214] On November 15, 1930, the new PNV was reconstituted, uniting the CNV and the Aberri-PNV. The common doctrine was adherence to the orthodox motto of 'God and the Old Laws', confessionalism, the primacy of race in Basque identity, and the underlying sovereignty of the individual Basque provinces.[215] However, the *aberriano* separatists crippled themselves by inviting the more numerous *comunionistas* to join them; the CNV being more popular, they rapidly dominated the PNV and marginalized advocates of separatism.[216]

Spanish elections in April 1931 were a massive victory for republicans, who promptly proclaimed the Spanish Second Republic. Eli Gallastegi returned from Mexico

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[212] Frank Gallagher, *Days of Fear* (London: John Murray, 1928), 113.
[213] Gudari Bat (pseud. Eli Gallastegi), "Persecución, cárcel, destierro…," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 10 (Nov. 19, 1932); "And today the Basque Country needs persecutions, sacrifices; people ready for sacrifice, for death [...] The history of Ireland offers us abundant and powerful examples."
[214] José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco: Estatutos de autonomía, partidos y elecciones: Historia de Acción Nacionalista Vasco* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2008), 19.
[215] Eduardo Renobales, *ANV, el otro nacionalismo: Historia de Acción Nacionalista Vasca - Eusko Abertzale Ekintza* (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 2005), 61-63.
[216] Ibid., 63.

shortly thereafter, with political inclinations as ambitious and radical as ever before. In September, he participated in the first ever hunger strike in Basque nationalism, at Larrinaga Prison, Bilbao.[217] As noted by his biographer, Gallastegi, well-read in Irish history, certainly had on his mind the famous example of Terence MacSwiney—a Sinn Féin activist who died after a 73-day hunger strike in a London prison in 1920—when he announced the hunger strike.[218] Indicative of the importance radical Basque nationalists attached to MacSwiney's hunger strike, one of Gallastegi's comrades wrote that had he not died, "Irish liberation would have been delayed by many years, like is happening in the Basque Country."[219] As Gallastegi would write many times, the radical Basque nationalists eagerly awaited a martyr from their own ranks.

On Easter Sunday, 1932, Basque nationalists celebrated the first *Aberri Eguna* (Fatherland Day). Its primary purpose was to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Sabino Arana's mythologized 'revelation' that the Basque Country was a nation, which took place on Easter Sunday, 1882 while in conversation with his brother Luis. However, the date lent *Aberri Eguna* quite naturally to association with the 1916 Easter Rising as well. Among the organizers of the event were Gallastegi and Ceferino Jemein (the husband of the first president of EAB).[220] Some 65,000 people attended the event in Bilbao,[221] which served also as an homage to the 1916 Rising, which ironically had been bitterly attacked in the most prominent Basque nationalist paper as it unfolded only 16 years earlier.[222]

The fall of the military dictatorship in Spain rendered regional autonomy a more realistic objective than ever before. The PNV supported an initiative in 1931 for a statute that would see the creation of a 'Basque state' comprising the four Spanish Basque provinces of Biscay, Gipuzkoa, Araba, and Navarre. Hoping for a restoration of the fueros, the Carlists, who still dominated in Navarre and Araba, cautiously backed the proposal,

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[217] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 158.
[218] Ibid., 192.
[219] Iñaki de Mendigutxia, "El alcalde de Cork," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 87 (Feb. 1, 1936).
[220] José Luis de la Granja Sainz, "El culto de Sabino Arana: la doble resurrección y el origen histórico del *Aberri Eguna* en la II República," *Historia y Política* no. 15 (2006): 94, 100.
[221] *Euzkadi* no. 5990 (Mar. 29, 1932).
[222] Lorenzo Espinosa, "La influencia del nacionalismo irlandés en el nacionalismo vasco 1916-1936," 246.

even if they disagreed with the rhetoric of 'Basque nationhood'.[223] Navarre presented a particular challenge to the aspirations of Basque nationalists. While Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Araba were brought under Castilian control at the turn of the twelfth century, Navarre remained an independent kingdom until conquered in 1512. Besides this sense of historical difference, "spoken Basque had retreated further there than in any of the other three provinces," and was now primarily limited to the northern portion of the province.[224] Historically, Navarre was ethno-linguistically Basque, though many considered 'Navarrese' and 'Basque' to be distinct, and the Basque nationalist movement had little chance of replacing Carlism—the still-dominant monarchist political ideology—in this province.

Country-wide parliamentary elections in June saw the PNV in a right-wing coalition with Carlists and Catholic independents, spurred by their resolute differences with leftists on the questions of religion and autonomy.[225] The decisive electoral victory of the right in the Basque Country set it apart from the rest of Spain as the only region where the left did not win.[226] They moved ahead with an autonomy statute, though it ultimately had to be watered down to bring it in line with the new Spanish constitution. Most Carlists could not bear the thought of secular, and in some cases, avowedly anti-clerical, republicans in Madrid having any say in religious matters at home, and were left by their party to vote on the statute as they saw fit.[227] It passed with 94.4 percent approval in Biscay, 95.1 percent in Gipuzkoa, 84.8 percent in Araba, and failed in Navarre with 53.2 percent of the votes against it.[228] Blinkhorn remarks that "to such students of the Irish problem as the Basque Nationalists, the lesson of the Navarrese vote ought to have been obvious. As with Ulster and Ireland, the province of Navarre simply did not fit neatly into the kind of political organism sought by the most zealous advocates of Basque nationhood."[229]

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[223] Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 47.
[224] Martin Blinkhorn, "'The Basque Ulster': Navarre and the Basque Autonomy Question under the Spanish Second Republic," *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 3 (Sep. 1974): 597.
[225] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 121.
[226] de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco*, 220; The coalition as a whole won 56 percent of the vote in the Basque Country, an edge of nearly 16 percent against the leftist block. Votes for the PNV accounted for 22.4 percent of the total. See Ibid., 217-218.
[227] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 127-128.
[228] de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco*, 298.
[229] Blinkhorn, "'The Basque Ulster'," 612.

However, there is no evidence that the Basque nationalists saw Navarre as 'the Basque Ulster'. While Blinkhorn in retrospect points to a clear parallel between Navarre and Northern Ireland, it is important to keep in mind that there is nothing to indicate a contemporary understanding of such a relationship. While we have seen Basque nationalists explicitly liken 'Ulster' to a broad 'traitorous element' within Basque society, it was never identified with a specific region or province. On the day after Navarre's rejection of the four-province autonomy statute, *Euzkadi* maintained hope that Navarre would still form a political union with the other Basque provinces of Spain in the future. The leading article clarified that they (the PNV) still loved Navarre and all its people, save for the few 'traitorous leaders' who defrauded the Navarrese people and sold out the province 'for thirty pieces of silver'.[230] Their understanding of Navarre does not form a neat parallel with the Irish republican understanding of Ulster (or rather, the six partitioned counties of Northern Ireland), the political and historical dynamics of which were manifestly different than those of Navarre. Moreover, crucially, the lesson that the Basque nationalists ought to have learned from this failure may not have been as obvious as Blinkhorn suggests.

The Basque nationalist alliance with the Carlists was irreversibly wounded, which encouraged the Spanish moderate left to make overtures to the PNV. They proceeded, yet again, with a new autonomy statute, this time without Navarre, and now with the reluctant blessing of the left.[231] It passed in all three provinces, albeit with a staggeringly high abstention rate of 41.5 percent in Araba, whose affinity with Navarre made many voters wary of this union.[232] The statute then needed approval in parliament, which, as we will see, proved to be an arduous task.

A New Era of Basque-Irish Relations

At a Sinn Féin assembly in March 1926, Éamon de Valera proposed that elected party members take their seats in the legally-recognized Free State Dáil. De Valera had been eyeing more pragmatic means of achieving a republic since 1923, and was prepared to abandon Sinn Féin's iconic policy of abstention from any political establishment other

[230] "La asamblea de ayuntamientos vascos," *Euzkadi* no. 6080 (Jun. 21, 1932).
[231] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 133.
[232] de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco*, 417.

than the revolutionary Dáil. However, his one caveat was that the Oath of Allegiance be removed.[233]

De Valera was narrowly outvoted on this motion, and he left Sinn Féin to form a new party: Fianna Fáil (Warriors of Destiny).[234] This new party took a tremendous bite out of Sinn Féin, which won only 5 seats in the June 1927 election (a loss of 42 seats) compared to Fianna Fáil's 44, and Cumann na nGaedheal's 47 (a loss of 16 seats).[235] A second general election in September of the same year saw an impoverished Sinn Féin not running a single candidate. Fianna Fáil raised its seat count to 57, and Cumann na nGaedheal to 62.[236] De Valera's republicans closed the gap (and then some) in the 1932 election, winning and forming a new government with 72 seats and the support of 7 Labour deputies. William T. Cosgrave lost his position as President of the Executive Council to his old civil war rival with 57 seats.[237]

Obligated to take the Oath of Allegiance after a legal change in 1927, Éamon de Valera creatively took the oath "without taking it—'signing the book' without reading, repeating, or listening to the words of the oath of allegiance."[238] In 1932, de Valera found himself at the head of the very state apparatus he had fought against less than a decade earlier, and thus began his efforts to 'republicanize' the Irish Free State from within. As part of the republicanization campaign, de Valera suspended the payment to Britain of land annuities, which initiated a series of retaliatory protectionist measures known as the 'Economic War' or the 'Anglo-Irish Trade War'.[239] Gradually undoing the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, de Valera abolished the oath of allegiance, and all-but-removed the position of Governor-General.[240]

One important change in the new Ireland of Fianna Fáil was the rehabilitation of republicans persecuted under the Cumann na nGaedheal government. IRA prisoners

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[233] Townshend, *Ireland*, 129-130; The Oath of Allegiance was a much-detested requirement of the Anglo-Irish Treaty that Irish members of parliament (or '*Teachtaí Dála*'/TDs as they were more commonly known in Irish) swear fidelity to the Constitution of the Irish Free State and to the British monarchy.
[234] Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 151-152.
[235] Ibid., 152.
[236] Ibid., 155.
[237] Ibid., 170.
[238] Townshend, *Ireland*, 130.
[239] Ibid., 137-141.
[240] Ibid., 136-137.

were released in 1932, and the proscription of the IRA and its newspaper was lifted (until 1936).[241] This change of climate was favourable for the anti-Treaty veteran Ambrose Martin, then in Argentina politically mobilizing the Irish diaspora, running a small-town 'Basque-Irish café', and networking with Basque nationalists based in Buenos Aires.[242] Martin made his way back to Ireland, but not before another detour in the Basque Country.

Martin returned to the Basque Country to give another series of speeches as it prepared to vote on the first autonomy statute in June 1932. The first, given in a packed conference hall in Algorta, covered the history of oppression in Ireland with a special focus on the fatal hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney—a timely reference, coming less than a year after the first Basque hunger strike led by his friend Eli Gallastegi. He also gave an overview of recent events, explaining that Ireland was now in good hands with the electoral victory of Fianna Fáil.[243] The Basque nationalist women's organization, EAB, celebrated the anniversary of its reformation (it had been proscribed from 1923 until the advent of the Republic) on June 18, and Martin took the opportunity to write an article in *Euzkadi* titled "The Influence of Women in Nationalism."[244] At another well-attended lecture, Martin could not keep back a smile at the sight of all the Irish flags in the crowd. The importance of having a figure with IRA credentials speaking in the Basque Country should not be understated. Ambrose Martin, addressing hundreds of young Basque nationalists in bustling conference halls on the interconnectedness of their struggle with that of the Irish revolutionaries, must have inspired many.[245]

After Martin's visit, EAB wrote a letter to Cumann na mBan leader Eithne Coyle, in French and in Basque, contained in an ornate folder bearing the Irish tricolour and the *ikurriña*—the Basque flag created by the Arana brothers (perhaps, ironically, modelled on the Union Jack):

> Ten years ago, the ninth of April 1922, on the occasion of a visit in our homeland of an enthusiastic warrior, Ambrose Victor Martin, and with his collaboration, which was of great value, the Association of Patriot Women—

[241] Ibid., 141; English, *Armed Struggle*, 53.
[242] Letter from Ambrose Martin to Juan Ceniseros (May 31, 1932), personal collection of Barra McFeely; Writing from Bilbao back to a friend in Buenos Aires, Martin said "I gave a big hug to Jesus [Urkidi?] and Eli [Gallastegi] on behalf of A.N.V. [*Acción Nacionalista Vasca*] of Buenos Aires."
[243] "Martin O'Daly, en Algorta. La conferencia de anoche," *Euzkadi* no. 6076 (Jun. 16, 1932).
[244] Ambrosio V. Martin, "La influencia de la mujer en el nacionalismo," *Euzkadi* no. 6078 (Jun. 18, 1932).
[245] See, for example, the advertisement for a lecture given by Ambrose Martin titled "El nacionalismo irlandés en relación con Euzkadi," *Euzkadi* no. 6084 (Jun. 25, 1932).

> Emakume Abertzale Batza—was founded in the Basque Country, inspired by the contemporary example of the Irish women and their glorious institution CUMANN NA MBAN [...] In this festival [the anniversary of EAB] where the Irish flag was honoured and graced by Irish music choirs, the thousands of Basque women moved with emotion dedicated their respects and congratulations to the Irish patriot women, and to this honourable institution over which you preside so admirably.[246]

Martin's visit in the Basque Country also coincided with two major events in Dublin which brought about one of the most substantial instances of contact between Basque and Irish nationalists. For the first time, Dublin was home to the annual Eucharistic Congress in June 1932, providing the newly-inaugurated de Valera a brilliant publicity opportunity to establish his government's Catholic credentials.[247] Preceding it by only a few days was the 1932 Tailteann Games—a Gaelic sporting event not unlike the Olympics, 'revived' from ancient times for the first time in 1924—, where the game of handball (or *pelota*) attracted Basques, who share a mutual love of the sport.[248] A handful of Basques set off for Dublin on June 19—pelota players Jose Aramendi and Manuel Urcelay, Jesuit priest Ramón Laborda, Vice-President of the Pelota Federation of Gipuzkoa (and member of the PNV's executive body in Gipuzkoa) Teodoro Ernandorena, and Basque nationalist Aingeru Irigaray. The architect of the operation, Ernandorena, stated in an interview that it was a "chance to bring our game of pelota and the problem of our nationalism outside of Euzkadi. The occasion could not have been more favourable" because "thousands of people from all over Europe" would be there for the Eucharistic Congress.[249]

Historian Pere Soler recounts how a 'delegation' of the PNV travelled to the games, seeing it as a propaganda opportunity.[250] However, it seems not to have been an official PNV propaganda operation; Ernandorena lamented in an interview with the local press

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[246] Letter from Julene Muxika and Terese Azkue to Eithne Coyle (Aug. 1932), UCDA P61/8(2).
[247] Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 177.
[248] Interestingly, the game was probably first brought to Ireland in a similar form due to contact between the Basque Country and western Ireland many centuries earlier. Naturally, the question of whether the Basques or the Irish created it first is contentious. See Tom O'Connor, "Handball—A Brief History," Gaelic Athletic Association Handball Website, https://www.gaahandball.ie/about/history.
[249] Azkoitiko Udala, "Irlanda Euskadi, 1932-2002: 70 aniversario de un evento pelotazale histórico," (2002). ANV DP-1316-06 (donated to Sabino Arana Fundazioa in 2002).
[250] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 415-416; Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 64.

on the day of his departure that the party refused to fund the excursion, and they needed to privately fundraise the necessary 3000 pesetas.[251] However, this did not stop Ernandorena from capitalizing on the opportunity to 'unofficially' represent Basque nationalism in Ireland. He regularly reported back to the Basque Country on the events of their trip, and *Euzkadi* followed with interest. EAB entrusted Ernandorena with gifts for the well-known republican activist Mary MacSwiney (some *emakumes* would have recently heard the lecture on her late brother Terence MacSwiney by Ambrose Martin) and Eithne Coyle—an *ikurriña* and a copy of the book *Historia Vasca* with a handwritten note on the inside: "Taking advantage of the voyage of some of our countrymen to Ireland the women of Euzkadi have the pleasure of sending you this little token of esteem for your many sacrifices in Erins [sic] cause."[252] Ernandorena's group was able to deliver the gifts personally; Coyle gifted them a collected works of Pearse in return.[253]

When they first arrived in Dublin, the Basque delegation was "received solicitously" by Garda Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy, members of the press, and their welcoming party (associated with the Irish Amateur Handball Association), who greeted them with a cry of '*Gora Euzkadi!*'[254] The head of their welcoming party, Michael Lennon, would prove to be a key link during their time in Dublin, because he spoke Spanish (none of the visiting Basques spoke English).[255]

After the games concluded, the Basques kept busy for a few days. Father Ramón Laborda, a seasoned tenor, took the opportunity to give public lectures on Basque music, with live performances of his own.[256] The group was received as special guests at a Dáil session, invited to the Mansion House for a "Ceilidhe under the auspices of Cumann na mBan,"[257] and permitted to conduct interviews with many key Irish figures, including Éamon de Valera. One of the Basques took brief notes on the people they met, providing

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[251] Iñaki, "Una charla del señor Hernandorena," *El Día* (Jun. 19, 1932).
[252] Copy of *Historia Vasca* sent to Eithne Coyle from Emakume Abertzale Batza, UCDA P61/45.
[253] Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 65.
[254] "Los pelotaris guipuzkoanos, en Dublin. Un telegrama del señor Ernandorena," *Euzkadi* no. 6081 (Jun. 22, 1932); Azkoitiko Udala, "Irlanda Euskadi," 5.
[255] ANV PNV-0219-03.
[256] Camino and Guezala, *Juventud y Nacionalismo Vasco*, 59; "Congress News Items," *Irish Times* (Jun. 28, 1932); "Ireland and the Basque Countries," *Irish Times* (Jun. 27, 1932).
[257] "Republican Ceilidhe," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 28, 1932).

a fascinating insight on a (moderate) Basque nationalist perspective of some key Irish personalities:

> Éamon de Valera: “Completely serious and straightforward. He gave us a warm welcome. [...] He wanted to know about our [Basque Autonomy] Statute” “He asked us some very interested questions”
>
> William T. Cosgrave: “He did not seem very favourable to Basque nationalism. He received us very frankly and the interview consisted of him making jokes about the convenience of maintaining a strong and unified ‘Catholic Spain’”
>
> Michael Lennon: “The person who helped us the most. He has been the instigator of all the interviews and presentations. He speaks Spanish quite well. And he is seemingly agreeable to Basque nationalism. He belongs to no party?”
>
> Michael Comyn: “Received us very humbly. He’s from De Valera’s party, and was present for the visit”
>
> Patrick Little: “Invited the Basques to a reception at his house (I didn’t go). He stayed with us for a while in the Dáil”
>
> Sean Gibbons: “He was the deputy who introduced us in the Dáil, he was in the interview with De Valera, he’s from his party”
>
> Sean O’Hanlon: “It was at his mother’s house that the Basques were lodged. He’s a republican, but he seems to do fine with the others. [...] He was with us in the Dáil, he took us by car to various places”
>
> “These are the people that I met, but Hernandorena and the others were presented to many more people, some names as far as I know continue down below.”
>
> General O’Duffy: “Chief of the police of the Free State. (They were with him several times)”
>
> Miss Mary MacSwiney: “(The sister of the mayor of Cork) She’s one of the leaders of the extremist republicans (very catholic)”[258]

[258] Reproduced in part from ANV PNV-0219-03; Notably, de Valera himself considered Mary MacSwiney “too extreme” when he denied her request to attend Treaty negotiations with Britain in 1921. See Uinseann MacEoin, *The IRA in the Twilight Years, 1923-1948* (Dublin: Argenta, 1997), 203.

Figure 4: Mary MacSwiney, gifts in hand, with the Basque visitors

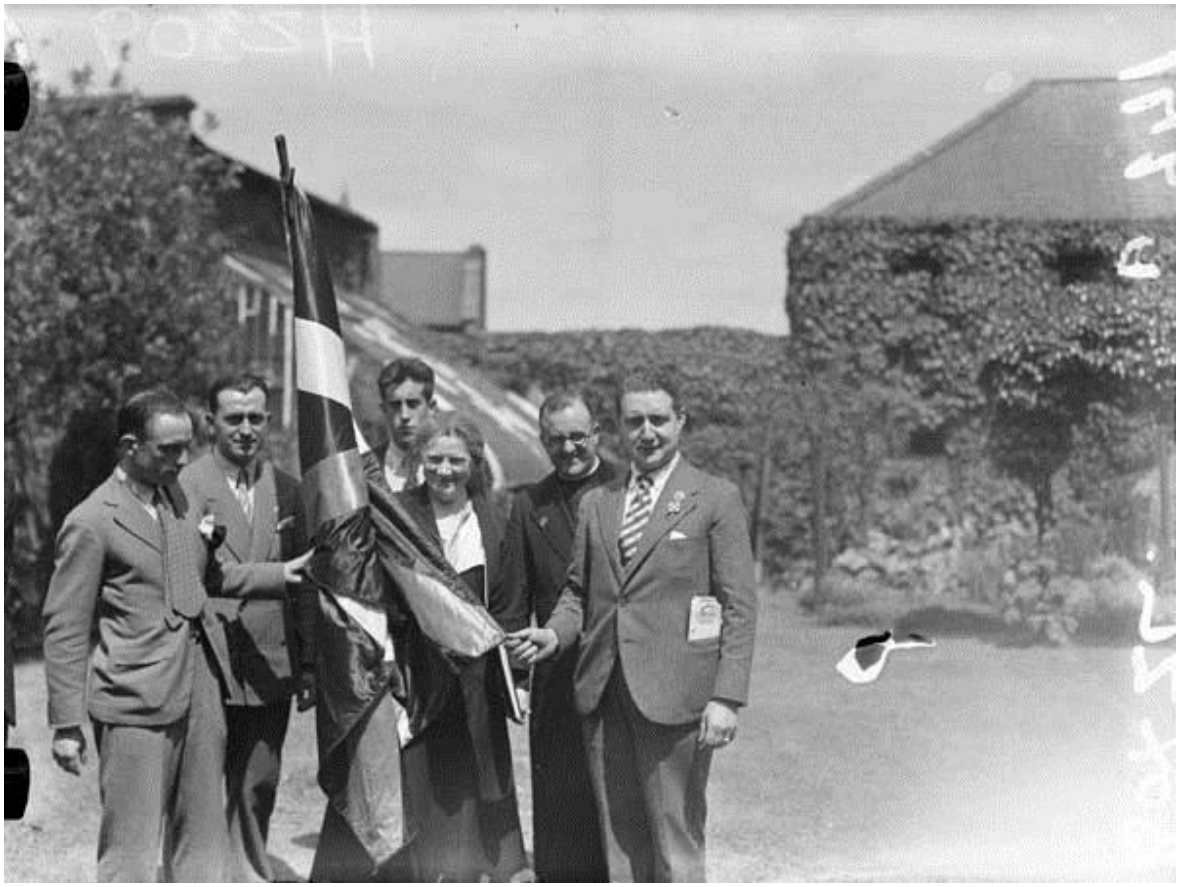

Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland and Independent News and Media

It is not clear who the note-taker was. This observer notes that he was not present for the meeting with Mary MacSwiney, yet the photo above confirms the presence of those Basques already mentioned. There is another Basque name mentioned in passing—"Mr. Epalza"—who was present for the special visit to the Irish parliament.[259] Based on the limited evidence here, (Txomin) Epalza might have been the one to write down these notes, though it is unknown why he seems not to have initially arrived with Ernandorena and the others. An addendum read: "Make three of copies of these and send this original to Mister Francisco [?]," and the scribbled-on flashcards eventually ended up in the possession of the Department of External Relations of the PNV's executive body in

[259] "Present for President," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 30, 1932).

Biscay. The notes also included a four-page report focused largely on explaining the current relations between Ireland and England in the context of the Economic War.[260]

The reception at the Mansion House stimulated several personal contacts which, considering the entanglement of Irish politics with the Basque nationalist cause during the Spanish Civil War (discussed in the following chapter), are striking in retrospect. Their interactions with key socialist republicans, and with fascist sympathizer Eoin O'Duffy and Cardinal MacRory, who would all later have a major stake in the war effort of Basque nationalists, raise many questions. Mary MacSwiney, seen photographed with the Basque visitors (who privately pointed out her 'extremism' and devout Catholicism) would go on to support Francisco Franco.[261] IRA activist Frank Ryan, who later headed the pro-Republic volunteer brigade in the Spanish Civil War, told the Basques

> that to the struggle of that nation the sympathy and support of Irish Republicans would be extended. If he was to voice the feelings of the audience and if he were to ask the foreign visitors to take back a message with them, the message would be one from Young Ireland...Militant Young Ireland believed that freedom was not something to be negotiated but for a God-given right to be asserted.[262]

However, like the Irish diplomatic effort in Spain in the early 1920s, there was a fundamental incongruence between the respective factions within Irish and Basque nationalism that were in contact. Laborda and Ernandorena, moderate cultural nationalists aligned with the mainstream PNV, must have cringed at the suggestion of 'asserting their freedom' in any sort of revolutionary sense.

Ernandorena wrote back to the Basque Country that "our flag has been hugged and kissed by the Irish. Many journalists interviewed me. [...] On Saturday I will give a conference, and a radio transmission in Basque."[263] And there was indeed considerable interest in the Irish press—one reporter stated that

> Dr. Ernandorena was rather enthusiastic that their movement for Home Rule was similar to the Sinn Féin movement of Griffith, Pierce [sic], etc., but, he added, 'we aim at getting all we want by peaceful means'. He said that

[260] All things considered, it seems likely that the five Basques who arrived first were indeed doing so on their own accord and did not represent the PNV. While the party refused to fund their expedition, it must have commissioned the lone Txomin Epalza (who we will see kept in touch with Michael Lennon during the Spanish Civil War) to take official notes.
[261] Fearghal McGarry, *Irish Politics and the Spanish Civil War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 96.
[262] "Visitors from Many Lands. Republican Reception," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 29, 1932).
[263] "Los pelotaris vascos, en Irlanda," *Euzkadi* no. 6083 (Jun. 24, 1932).

> their visit to Ireland was urged by their sympathy and admiration for the country and because of the similarity of the political position in the two countries. He added that they carried with them a message of good-will to the Irish people from the Basques.[264]

Overall, coverage of the visiting Basques in the Irish press was invariably positive. Again, this is especially striking considering events only a few years later. The *Irish Independent* was at this point sympathetic with the Basque nationalists, writing that they had cooperated with the Spanish Second Republic when it falsely promised them that they would respect religion and take the form of a federal republic.[265] Less than five years later this same paper would excitedly report: "BILBAO ALMOST ENCIRCLED. SMOKE RISES FROM CITY. The victorious Patriots yesterday continued their encirclement of Bilbao, the Basque capital."[266]

On their final day in Ireland, the Basque group and their guide, Michael Lennon, were featured in a radio broadcast from Dublin, addressing both their Irish hosts and their Basque compatriots at home. Lennon gave a message in Spanish and Irish to the Basque public, one of the pelota players thanked the Irish public for their hospitality, and Ernandorena thanked the fundraisers who made the expedition possible.[267] Financial difficulties would spell an end for the Tailteann Games after 1932; Basque pelota players would not formally face their Irish counterparts again until 2002.[268]

In 1933, Basque nationalist José Maria de Ituarte was visiting Ireland and wrote a brief overview of recent political developments, which he sent to the PNV. It is unclear whether he was asked by the party to do this, or he took it upon himself. He laboriously searched for, and finally located a copy of the 1905 constitution of Sinn Féin to send back to the PNV, but it is not clear why any party official would have cared for the outdated document. Thanks again to Michael Lennon, he was introduced to various figures in Fianna Fáil and Cumann na nGaedheal. He reported:

> The IRA, the group of Miss Mary MacSwiney (the sister of the mayor of Cork), and those from 'An Ciendar' (I am not sure about the spelling of this

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[264] "Basque Visitors to Dublin. The Problems of a Small Nation," *Irish Times* (Jun. 24, 1932).
[265] "The Basques' Trials. Dissolution of Jesuits," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 28, 1932).
[266] "Bilbao almost encircled. Smoke rises from city," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 18, 1937).
[267] "Basque Programme from 2RN," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 29, 1932); "Los pelotaris vascos, en Dublín," *Euzkadi* no. 6087 (Jun. 29, 1932).
[268] Azkoitiko Udala, "Irlanda-Euskadi 1932," 6.

> word, as it is Gaelic and I am writing it from memory) comprise a group calling itself republican (de Valera calls them this too) which they accuse of being communist, upon what foundation I do not know. This whole republican group, which represents the most fanatical nationalism, is now encountering considerable difficulties since various bishops have come out against them, accusing them of being illegal and of concomitance with communism, and recently in a speech de Valera announced that he would not permit the functioning of the IRA because there already exists a regular army of the Free State. These republicans are a minority in number and youngsters predominate.[269]

Ituarte noted at the end that most of the people he met "know nothing about Basque things beyond hearsay and bad rumours, and many would like to know," so he asked for copies of constitutions and propaganda materials to disseminate amongst contacts there.[270]

Also in 1933, the PNV was able to solicit a brief statement from de Valera to include in a book called *El libro de oro de la patria* (The Golden Book of the Fatherland). Published the following year, its first page featured a portrait of the Irish leader with a quotation which read: "With the great sentiments of a patriot. I salute all the Basques and trust that they will obtain their liberties."[271] The charismatic new leader of the PNV—Jose Antonio Agirre—nearly had the chance to formally interview de Valera in 1935 at the Congrès des Nationalités Européennes in Geneva but was ultimately unable to due to a scheduling conflict.[272] Their relationship with the Irish leader was to remain indirect.

Escalating Violence in the Basque Country and Ireland

In the background, the further polarization of politics and escalation of violence occurred in Ireland and the Basque Country just as they did elsewhere in Europe. September 1932 marked the most radical incarnation of Basque nationalism yet with the foundation of *Jagi-Jagi* (Arise Arise) headed by Eli Gallastegi.[273] Its birth was, as historian Eduardo

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[269] ANV PNV-0218-03.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 471.
[272] Xosé Estévez, "El nacionalismo vasco y los Congresos de Minorías Nacionales de la Sociedad de Naciones (1916-1936)," in *XI Congreso de Estudios Vascos, Nuevas formulaciones culturales: Euskal Herria y Europa* (Donostia: Eusko Ikaskuntza, 1992), 321.
[273] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 157; It was a newspaper, and the group associated with it bears the same name.

Renobales notes, a symptom of the old, unclosed wounds that had plagued Basque nationalism from its earliest years.[274] This organization, rooted in the *mendigoxale* tradition, was unapologetically separatist,[275] anti-capitalist (explicitly based in the writings of Irish republican-socialist and martyr of the 1916 Easter Rising, James Connolly),[276] militant, and positively obsessed with the Irish example. It remained, at least for the first two years, technically attached to the PNV, just as *Aberri* initially had been in 1916. However, it categorically refused to work within the Spanish political framework. One member wrote: "As Basques, we will not unite with those who carry the epithet 'Spaniard', because we are not traitors to our homeland. Because we do not cowardly sell our ourselves to the enemy that vassalizes us."[277]

Its self-drawn parallel with Connollyite anti-capitalism was hard to ignore—one issue featured a quotation from James Connolly twice, once with 'Ireland' and 'Irish' swapped with 'Basque Country' and 'Basque' beside the original, suggesting that was true for Ireland was true for the Basques as well.[278] However, it refused to call itself left-wing, considering Basque nationalism to be a 'third way' that transcended the left-right dichotomy.[279] Furthermore, not only was *Jagi-Jagi*'s rhetoric towards socialists extremely hostile, but its members sporadically fought them in the classic politically-charged brawls that bloodied the streets of 1930s Europe.[280] Gaizka Fernández claims that they "led violent clashes with other youth groups, primarily those of the working-class left," though it would be disingenuous to imply that they were always, or necessarily most often,

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[274] Eduardo Renobales, *Jagi-Jagi: Historia del independentismo vasco* (Algorta: Ahaztuak 1936-1977, 2010), 89.
[275] Once in a while they would perform the same mental gymnastics that ETA would decades later and claim that they were not separatist because there was nothing to separate. One member wrote "We are not separatists. The separatists are those who placed one same people, one same race, under the flag of two states [Spain and France]." See Pedro de Basaldua, "Separatistas," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 12 (Dec. 10, 1932). This assertion might have confused those who, every Saturday morning in downtown Bilbao, heard it being sold by a vendor shouting "Jagi-Jagi! Basque separatist weekly!" See Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 160.
[276] Antonio Elorza, *Ideologías del nacionalismo vasco 1876-1937: De los 'euskaros' a Jagi Jagi* (San Sebastián: L. Haranburu, 1978), 447.
[277] Keamti, "¿Derechas? ¿Izquierdas? Somos nacionalistas vascos," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 25 (Mar. 18, 1933).
[278] "¡Obrero vasco!," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 25 (Mar. 18, 1933); It was a quote from James Connolly, *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* (1915).
[279] Keamti, "¿Derechas? ¿Izquierdas? Somos nacionalistas vascos," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 25 (Mar. 18, 1933).
[280] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 134.

responsible (determining this would be futile). Its members were sometimes ambushed and shot to death by rival socialists.[281]

The question of violence as it relates to this organization has serious implications for how we consider the 'Irish influence' in Basque nationalism. Lorenzo writes that they recognized that recourse to force was probably inevitable in order to attain independence.[282] Watson carefully suggests that, broadly speaking, "the Irish example supported and amplified adherence to the potential strategy of violence in the Basque nationalist imagination."[283] Fernández observes that "despite having in mind the model of radical Irish nationalism, the jagi-jagis did not come to put into practice a strategy of terrorism."[284] However, that was neither their goal nor the lesson they derived from the radical Irish example (regardless of how one might define the cumbersome label of 'terrorism').

The attitude of *Jagi-Jagi* toward 'struggle' centred around 'spiritual struggle' and sacrificial death. The 'blood sacrifice' rhetoric took clear influence from Pádraic Pearse at times, and they did cite him on occasion, but it partially echoed what Basque nationalists had already been espousing from early on. One 1908 article titled "Let us fight!" read: "Yes, let us fight, but not the bloody, personal fight, unfitting for a people who feels dispossessed of culture; our fight must make itself resound and felt everywhere through its transcendence."[285] Gallastegi frequently couched these notions in the language of combat and bellicose metaphors, but his preparedness for actual violence is less than certain: "In this battle of ideals, of clean hands; this battle of conduct, of exemplarity, and maintaining all sense of proportion, we have advanced like so [...] Now we are in the new trench on the front!"[286] Regarding their next advance, a fellow member of *Jagi-Jagi* wrote:

> We do not proclaim violence, since it does not fit the spirit of Jagi-Jagi, no, we preach civil disobedience and personal SACRIFICE [...] We will win the second trench cleanly, like our very good collaborator 'Gudari' said of the first in these same pages—all of us sacrificing ourselves, all of us, rich and

[281] "El pistolerismo rojo," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 36 (Jun. 19, 1933).
[282] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 165.
[283] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 123.
[284] Fernández Soldevilla, *La voluntad del gudari*, 150.
[285] Peli Ex-Karka, "¡Luchemos!," *Gipuzkoarra* no. 46 (May 23, 1908).
[286] Gudari (pseud. Eli Gallastegi), "Una trinchera más," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 18 (Jan. 21, 1933).

> poor, women and men, and we will have made a great advance in our fight.[287]

Gallastegi's loyal follower, *Txanka*, who had been perhaps the first radical Basque nationalist to contact the Irish government back in 1921, and had translated some works of Pearse into Spanish,[288] addressed the question of violence explicitly in an ideological synopsis of *Jagi-Jagi*:

> We believe in the force of truth and not the force of force. This can triumph sporadically, but ultimately it fails. The force of truth, however, suffers defeats periodically, but its inevitable end must be victory [...] The enemy will always defeat us by force, for it holds the reins of power, but through sacrifice we will inflict upon it the most humiliating defeat.[289]

This language was strikingly similar to that of their much-admired hunger striker Terence MacSwiney, who famously said: "It is not those who can inflict the most but those that can suffer the most who will conquer."[290]

However, such rhetoric did not necessarily entail that an insurrection like the Easter Rising was an altogether unwelcome outcome. *Jagi-Jagi* emphasized that thanks to James Connolly, Tom Clarke, and Pádraic Pearse, the Rising was a 'triumph of the spirit' and not of 'brute force'.[291] When other articles prominently featured quotations such as "THE HISTORY OF PEOPLES WHO WIN LIBERTY IS ALWAYS WRITTEN IN BLOOD,"[292] it raises the question of whether they genuinely believed they could bleed without drawing blood. Evidently, in the context of the street violence, the killings, and persecution at the hands of the state, some members of this marginal group had a hard time holding back. One anonymous member wrote, in an article titled "Politics with Blood," that

> if there is any blame in all this, in no way does it belong to us. Because Basque nationalism, which could have formed groups of determined and brave youths to wipe out the murderers [...] preferred to recommend calm and restraint to the Basque patriots, believing that our enemies would agree to a noble and human fight, that demands all probity. But now you see that

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[287] Txirika, "Un paso al frente," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 20 (Feb. 4, 1933).
[288] Juaristi, *El bucle melancólico*, 209.
[289] Txanka (pseud. Manu de la Sota), "Resumen ideológico de un año," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 49 (Sep. 16, 1933).
[290] Tim Pat Coogan, *On the Blanket: The Inside Story of the IRA Prisoners' "Dirty" Protest* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 28.
[291] "El secreto de la fuerza," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 73 (Jul. 21, 1934).
[292] *Jagi-Jagi* no. 55 (Nov. 30, 1933).

> for some people, as for some animals, everything from words to threats turn out to be sterile. And there is no remedy other than to resort to the whip, which is, for us idealist men, something we have always condemned.[293]

In that same issue, another article titled "Basque youths: Do not kill!," implored: "Contain yourselves *mendigoxales*, all youths who fight for the cause, contain your impulses."[294]

This subtext demonstrates the danger in taking some *Jagi-Jagi* rhetoric at face value as though they were pacifists. As Núñez notes, "the cult of sacrifice implicitly led to the necessity of violence."[295] Whether Gallastegi and his followers recognized this, and simply hid their ulterior motives is debatable. However, their weapons training exercises in the mountains must have brought more to mind than only their own deaths.[296] After all, the heroes of the Easter Rising, who were covered extensively in *Jagi-Jagi*,[297] would likely not have been killed or executed in a peaceful protest. James Connolly, executed for his role in the Rising and well-studied by *Jagi-Jagi*, perhaps spoke to the radical Basque nationalists with his reflections on violence in 1899:

> We neither exalt [physical force] into a principle nor repudiate it as something not to be thought of. Our position towards it is that the use or non-use of force for the realization of ideas of progress always has been and always will be determined by the attitude, not of the party of progress, but of the governing class opposed to that party.[298]

In Ireland, the gulf between the fringes of the left and the right had been steadily growing since the twilight years of Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal government in the early 1930s. In 1925, the IRA split from the political authority of Sinn Féin. Historian Donal Ó Drisceoil identifies four broad tendencies within the IRA at this time: revolutionary socialism, apolitical militarism, social conservatism, and a middle group of pragmatists.[299] The socialist republican faction was headed by anti-Treatyite veterans such as Frank Ryan, Peadar O'Donnell, and George Gilmore, and these leftist members of the IRA grew

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[293] "Política con sangre," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 74 (Jul. 28, 1934).
[294] Umaran'tar E., "Juventudes vascas: ¡No matar!," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 74 (Jul. 28, 1934).
[295] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua," 461.
[296] Renobales, *Jagi-Jagi*, 114-115.
[297] Discussion of Ireland can be found in nos. 2, 4, 10, 27, 31, 43, 63-73, to name some.
[298] James Connolly, "Physical Force in Irish Politics," *Workers' Republic* (Jul. 22, 1899) quoted in James Connolly, *James Connolly: Selected Writings* (ed. P. Berresford Ellis) (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), 208.
[299] Donal Ó Drisceoil, "The 'Irregular and Bolshie situation': Republicanism and Communism 1921-36," in *Republicanism in Modern Ireland*, ed. Fearghal McGarry (Dublin: UCD Press, 2003), 46.

increasingly frustrated by the predominance of the 'apolitical militarists' in the organization. In 1931, O'Donnell helped establish Saor Éire (Free Ireland), a socialist offshoot of the IRA. Internal documentation from the group fell into the hands of the Commissioner of the Garda Síochána (the police force of the Irish Free State), pro-Treaty IRA veteran General Eoin O'Duffy, who saw Saor Éire as proof that the IRA had become a communist organization (in reality, most of the IRA was not committed to a socialist revolution).[300] O'Duffy was a principal force behind the red scare that swept Ireland in the 1930s, and demanded that the authorities take immediate action against the IRA.[301] Both Church and state, as represented respectively by Primate of All Ireland Joseph MacRory and leader of the Irish Free State William T. Cosgrave, came out strongly against what they saw as a plot to introduce Soviet communism into Ireland.[302] Saor Éire, along with the IRA and Cumann na mBan, was declared an illegal organization shortly thereafter, which would be undone by de Valera after his electoral victory in 1932.[303]

The zealous O'Duffy began to prepare a coup that would install a military dictatorship in the event of a Fianna Fáil election win—a party seen by many Treatyites as the puppet of a vengeful IRA.[304] Of course, this never came close to materializing, and in 1933 de Valera dismissed O'Duffy from his post of ten years as Garda Commissioner.[305] His dismissal arrived at a moment when the Army Comrades Association—a veterans' organization comprising many pro-Treaty IRA veterans hostile to their civil war foes from the anti-Treaty IRA—sought new leadership.[306] O'Duffy assumed control, and under his leadership it was renamed the National Guard, though came to be more commonly known as the Blueshirts, for its standardized uniforms reminiscent of European fascist movements.[307]

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[300] English, *Armed Struggle*, 49.
[301] Richard English, *Radicals and the Republic: Socialist Republicanism in the Irish Free State 1925-1937* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 140; Ó Drisceoil, "The 'Irregular and Bolshie situation'," 51; Jonathan Hammill, "Saor Éire and the IRA: An Exercise in Deception?," *Saothar* 20 (1995): 56.
[302] English, *Radicals and the Republic*, 142-143; McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 184.
[303] MacEoin, *The IRA in the Twilight Years*, 208.
[304] McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 189-190.
[305] Ibid., 197.
[306] Maurice Manning, *The Blueshirts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 70-73.
[307] Mike Cronin, "The Blueshirt Movement, 1932-5: Ireland's Fascists?," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30, no. 2 (Apr. 1995): 311.

In September 1933, Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal, Eoin O'Duffy's Blueshirts, and the short-lived National Centre Party united to form a new political party: Fine Gael (Family of the Gaels), briefly led by O'Duffy himself.[308] Meanwhile, the Blueshirts and the IRA were at each other's throats. During O'Duffy's tenure as leader of the Blueshirts, large groups would brawl with IRA contingents until they were pulled apart by the police.[309] The leftist republicans, with their frequent cry of 'no free speech for traitors!', also sought out physical confrontations with their rivals, who they understandably saw as fascists.[310] However, O'Duffy's reign as Fine Gael leader ended with his resignation a year later, and he then subsequently left the Blueshirts.[311]

It was a time for rebranding for both ends of the political spectrum in Ireland. O'Donnell, Ryan, and Gilmore founded a new political organization in 1934, the Republican Congress, after abandoning the IRA.[312] With unbridled optimism, this socialist splinter group saw itself as having "stirred the moribund Republican movement into life."[313] General Eoin O'Duffy formed the "openly fascist" National Corporate Party.[314]

Basque Nationalism, Spanish Politics, and the Spectre of War

Around this time in the Spanish Basque Country, the PNV still eagerly awaited a statute of autonomy. The 1933 statute which had received majority support in the three provinces never passed in the Spanish parliament, ostensibly due to the high abstention in Araba. Faced with a critical election in 1936, the PNV remained unaligned with either the liberal-left Popular Front or the "counterrevolutionary electoral alliance" of the right.[315] Despite its natural affinity with the political right, and the surprisingly heavy-handed persecution of Basque nationalism by the Spanish Second Republic, the PNV chose not to join the

[308] Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 179.
[309] Report from Garda Superintendent J. Kelly (Jun. 10, 1934), NAI JUS 8/128.
[310] McGarry, *Frank Ryan*, 36; Brian Hanley, "Fighting the Fascists: Ireland in the 1930s," in *Gernika Then and Now: 80 Years of Basque-Irish Anti-Fascist Struggles*, ed. Gernika 80—Then and Now Committee (Dublin, 2017), 24; Manning, *The Blueshirts*, 32.
[311] Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 180; Manning, *The Blueshirts*, 146-163.
[312] English, *Radicals and the Republic*, 188.
[313] George Gilmore, *The Irish Republican Congress* (Cork: Cork Workers' Club, 1974 [first ed. 1935]), 20.
[314] Cronin, "The Blueshirt Movement, 1932-5," 319.
[315] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 145.

broad right-wing coalition because the Popular Front government finally guaranteed them an autonomy statute.[316] Moreover, the self-proclaimed and virulently 'anti-separatist' right was hardly a comfortable bedfellow.[317]

The 1936 election returned a slim victory for the Popular Front in the Spanish parliament, and the PNV won in Biscay and Gipuzkoa, but not Araba.[318] The PNV then moved ahead with a two-province autonomy statute. As rumours of a country-wide rebellion abounded, some members of the PNV entertained the overtures of the rightist conspirators.[319] In July 1936, when the rebellion against the Spanish Second Republic orchestrated by Brigadier General Emilio Mola commenced, the PNV branches in Araba and Navarre implored the central party leadership to go along with the so-called 'Rising' (a small irony considering the connotations of the word in modern Irish history).[320]

Eli Gallastegi, the hibernophile extraordinaire, advocated neutrality. Contrary to what his pen name would suggest, *Gudari* (Warrior) wanted the *mendigoxales*, who had been trained for years as a sort of paramilitary army, to assert their Basqueness by abstaining from what he saw as a Spanish affair.[321] When not writing, he made a decent living with a few business ventures, one of which was an import-export business by the name of *Euzkerin* (a portmanteau of *Euzkadi* and *Erin*) that traded with Ireland, which he sought to aid in its economic war with Great Britain.[322] On the other side of this venture was the rehabilitated Ambrose Martin, whose Irish-Iberian Trading Company had been granted lucrative trade licences by the Fianna Fáil government. He perhaps also benefited from the appointment of his close contact and associate of de Valera, Leopold Kerney, as ambassador to Spain in 1935.[323] Thanks to the efforts of Gallastegi and Martin, amidst all the chaos in the streets of 1930s Bilbao, one could at least enjoy a pint of Guinness.[324]

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[316] Watson, *Modern Basque History*, 277.
[317] de la Granja Sainz, *Nacionalismo y II República en el País Vasco*, 586-587.
[318] de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 166.
[319] Ibid., 167-169.
[320] Ibid., 171.
[321] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 230-232; Renobales, *Jagi-Jagi*, 192.
[322] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 59.
[323] Letter from Ambrose Martin to Leopold Kerney (Sep. 13, 1935) NAI DFA EMBASSY SERIES 2/24; Technically his position was Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain.
[324] Daniel Leach, *Fugitive Ireland: European minority nationalists and Irish political asylum, 1937-2008* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2009), 57; While this might sound fairly apocryphal, there is a 1934 letter from a

CHAPTER FIVE
Civil Wars, 1936-1939

"Whether there is to be a centralised government or whether there are to be several independent states in the peninsula—Basque, Catalonian, Castilian—is not a concern of Irishmen."

Liam de Róiste, 1936[325]

"We invite them all to come to our country, to Euzkadi, to see what kind of Catholics we are. To see what we have done for God. To see the Holy Cross of our Saviour in our public schools. As we are a bit sick of diplomacy."

Euzko Deya, 1936[326]

A Basque Civil War

The Spanish Civil War is well known for its international dimension, yet a number of other internal conflicts were played out within it. The in-fighting between Anarchists and Communists behind Catalan lines famously described by George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia* is perhaps the most famous example. Several historians also point to a 'Basque civil war' between the Carlists and the *Euzko Gudarostea* (Basque Army), the forces commanded by the Basque government in Biscay and Gipuzkoa. Leading up to the rebellion, the Spanish government, wary of the loyalty of some of its own military officers, had dispersed notable suspect officers in the farthest reaches of the country. The future dictator of the country, Francisco Franco, for example, was sent to the Canary Islands. However, they made the grave error of sending the mastermind of the military conspiracy against the government, Emilio Mola, to Pamplona, Navarre.[327] Far from being a quarantine, the Navarrese capital was the heart and soul of the most dedicated counterrevolutionaries, the Carlists.

Basque trading manager to Kerney asking him to study the viability of bringing to Bilbao, among other things "some cereals such as brewers and distillers grains" and "beer, porter and ale." See letter from J. Luis de Cortina to Leopold Kerney (Oct. 18, 1934), NAI DFA EMBASSY SERIES 2/24.

[325] Liam de Róiste "Letters to the Editor: Ireland and Spain," *Irish Examiner* (Nov. 21, 1936).

[326] An article aimed largely at the Irish public, from a Basque nationalist periodical produced in Paris during the Spanish Civil War, analogous to the *Irish Bulletin*; "Attitudes and feelings: Fascism disguised or not disguised is essentially antichristian" *Euzko Deya* no. 6 (Dec. 17, 1936).

[327] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), 94.

Ever since the revolutionary fervour that shook Spain in 1934 (notably the Asturian miners' strike, which left some 3000 dead), Carlists had become increasingly militant, advocating for a pre-emptive first strike against the left.[328] They recalled the great guerrilla tactician of the Basque front in the First Carlist War who had died a century earlier—Tomás Zumalacárregui—"he was our hero and is a national figure [...] Requetés! Let us not forget the red of our beret."[329] Ironically, Basque nationalists also co-opted this Gipuzkoan commander, interpreting the First Carlist War as a manifestation of Basque nationalism.[330] The Carlist militia, known as the 'Requeté', began seriously arming itself in 1935 with the help of its wealthiest associates and the fascist Italian government.[331] Blinkhorn claims that on the eve of the rebellion, the Requeté, by nature a "rurally based, genuine citizen army," was "probably the most numerous paramilitary body on the Spanish right."[332]

By the time of the Spanish Civil War, these staunchly traditionalist monarchists had already been something of an anachronism for a while; one Irish observer referred to the Carlists as "strange and outmoded survivors of an age that seemed remote."[333] Nonetheless, they were willing and able allies of the military conspirators—comprised of fascists (from the *Falange*), Catholic nationalists, and other monarchists—as they planned to overthrow the Spanish Second Republic. The Carlists imagined this war as the Fourth Carlist War, though this time Bilbao was not the same liberal stronghold that had resisted Zumalacárregui in 1835. Now it was firmly in the hands of the PNV-led Basque government. With Basque nationalists in Biscay and Gipuzkoa having thrown in their lot with the Republic, they faced an imminent danger from the Carlists on their doorstep (and indeed, within their own territory). The Popular Front government appealed to the Basque nationalists to "fight to the death the Carlists who wish to destroy all your liberties."[334]

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[328] Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939*, 218.
[329] *El Siglo Futuro* (Mar. 12, 1935) quoted in Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939*, 218.
[330] Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 114.
[331] Blinkhorn, *Carlism and Crisis in Spain, 1931-1939*, 222.
[332] Ibid., 224.
[333] A. A. Parker, "Carlism in the Spanish Civil War, Part III," *Studies* 26, no. 103 (Sep. 1937): 385-386.
[334] "The War in Spain," *Irish Times* (Aug. 21, 1936).

At the beginning of August 1936, an army comprised mostly of Requetés advanced into southern and eastern Gipuzkoa from Navarre. By early September, they definitively held the eastern part of the province, cutting off access by land to France.[335] Behind the lines, members of the PNV in Navarre and Araba were mostly spared from the thousands of executions carried out by the Carlists.[336] The red-capped monarchists were unflinchingly hostile to separatism, and had no desire to join the forthcoming 'Republic of Euzkadi', but harboured far more hatred for leftists than for Basque nationalists.

Not only can historians call this a Basque civil war in retrospect, but it was understood as such at the time. One *mendigoxale* from Bilbao remarked: "It was absurd, tragic—we had more in common with the Carlists who were attacking us than with the people we suddenly found ourselves in alliance with."[337] The PNV explicitly called the Navarrese Carlists fratricidal, and asked how they could bring themselves to kill their brothers when only a few years earlier they had proudly called themselves Basques.[338] Indeed, it was only four years before the war that Navarre had nearly signed an autonomy statute alongside the other three Spanish Basque provinces.

The Basque Dimension of the 'Irish Brigade' in Spain

Behind the scenes, a clique of right-wing Spaniards in London was busily mobilizing international support for the rebellion. This network included the old Spanish ambassador to Britain, Alfonso Merry del Val y Zulueta,[339] who later published *Spanish Basques and Separatism*, a short book meant to reveal the nefarious truth about Basque nationalism to the British and Irish public. Many people had been fooled by them, he wrote, for "[t]he Basque Separatist is nothing if not a master of propaganda in its latest form as taught in the schools of Moscow."[340] An associate of Merry del Val, Carlist nobleman Count

[335] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 167.
[336] Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 183; Watson, *Basque Nationalism and Political Violence*, 147-148.
[337] Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), 191.
[338] "Los insurrectos de Navarra: Cómo han llegado al fratricidio," *Euzko Deya* no. 38 (Apr. 8, 1937).
[339] Ironically, his ancestry was Basque and Irish.
[340] Alfonso Merry del Val, *Spanish Basques and Separatism* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1939), 26.

Ramírez de Arellano, was in touch with Emilio Mola as he planned the uprising. For reasons "imperfectly clear," Arellano contacted Irish Cardinal Joseph MacRory, who then put him in touch with General Eoin O'Duffy.[341] An under-the-table arrangement resulted in the leader of Ireland's National Corporate Party to begin recruiting for an 'Irish Brigade' to go fight in Spain.[342] Fearghal McGarry explains that beneath the rhetoric of defending the Church against the 'reds', this was a clear opportunity for "political rehabilitation" for the humiliated O'Duffy, recently fired by de Valera from his longstanding position as Garda Commissioner and then deposed as Fine Gael leader.[343]

There has been considerable historical debate surrounding Eoin O'Duffy's political inclinations. His penchant for the "liturgical aspects of fascism (the uniforms, salutes, parades, and mass rallies),"[344] his apologism of Hitler and Mussolini, his zealous nationalism, anti-communism, and emphasis on national virility, and his own corporatist political outlook, all point to fascism. Historians generally agree that during his prominent role in Fine Gael and subsequent leadership of the Blueshirts, his personal fascistic politics were reigned in by the more politically respectable conservative elements within these groups. By leaving the Blueshirts to form the National Corporate Party, O'Duffy is seen as having "follow[ed] his instincts towards undisguised fascism."[345]

However, the interesting point about Eoin O'Duffy's intervention in the Spanish Civil War is that it was at the behest of Navarrese Carlists rather than a genuinely fascist organization—with which he might have shared more in common at least superficially—such as the *Falange* led by *Jefe* José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the late dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera.[346] O'Duffy, however, was deeply moved by the intense religious devotion of the traditionalist monarchists. He was brought to Pamplona in September 1936 to formalize the arrangements for his volunteer corps. The proud General O'Duffy was warmly welcomed by Navarrese provincial officials and members of the Carlist High Command, who gifted him an iconic red beret, and accompanied him at a celebratory

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[341] Robert Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939: Crusades in Conflict* (Manchester: Mandolin, 1999), 7.
[342] Ibid.
[343] McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 286.
[344] Ibid., 244.
[345] Ibid., 269; Cronin, "The Blueshirt Movement, 1932-5," 318-319.
[346] To be precise, the organization was from 1934 to 1937 called the *Falange Española de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* (Spanish Phalanx of the Councils of the National Syndicalist Offensive).

mass at the cathedral.[347] Stradling recounts how O'Duffy met the primate of Spain, Cardinal Isidro Gomá, from whom "he received his first instruction concerning the Basques and the paradoxical nature of their resistance to the [Spanish] nationalist movement."[348] However, while O'Duffy's understanding of the intricacies of Spanish politics is often deprecated, he certainly already had some familiarity with Basque nationalism going back at least to his interactions with Ernandorena's group in 1932.

What is most interesting is how O'Duffy dealt with the fact that he found himself near the front of a war between Basques. After all, he did not hesitate to refer to Navarre as the Basque Country.[349] On September 24, General Francisco Franco, who had rapidly risen to become the face of the rebellion, approved the terms of agreement for O'Duffy's Irish Brigade. In his own account, O'Duffy cites Clause Six of the agreement: "The Irish Brigade may be employed on any front with the sole exception of the Basque front. General O'Duffy objects to the Irish troops being engaged against the Basque Nationalists for reasons of religion and traditional ties between the Basques and the Irish."[350] However, O'Duffy must only have been recalling it from memory, because the original document, on file at the National Library of Ireland, reads: "General O'Duffy points out that it would be preferable not to oppose the Irish to the Basque Nationalists, who are Catholics. With this sole exception, they may be employed on any other Front."[351] While the original carries a slightly less forceful tone, it also never said anything about 'traditional ties' with the Basques; perhaps O'Duffy intentionally omitted such a reference so as to downplay his affinity with them?

More importantly, what was his conception of these 'traditional ties'? Potentially, a vague notion of such a thing was communicated in the sympathetic chats between the Basques and the Irish in the Mansion House in 1932. Perhaps O'Duffy knew of historic Basque-Irish ties from elsewhere. Such references popped up sporadically during his lifetime. As mentioned in the Introduction, there is evidence of a popular understanding of an ancient Basque-Irish relationship. One 1925 article in the *Irish Times* called the

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[347] Unknown newspaper clipping (probably *Irish Independent*, n.d.), NAI JUS 8/308; Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War,* 19; McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 287.
[348] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War,* 21.
[349] Eoin O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain* (Clonskeagh: Browne and Nolan, 1938), 195-198.
[350] Ibid., 195.
[351] "Agreement between H.E. General Franco and General Ean O'Duffy," NLI MS 48,292/4.

Basques "one of Ireland's pre-historic settlers."[352] A 1937 article noted as though it were obvious that the "tie of sympathy between Ireland and the Basque Country, it is hardly necessary to point out, is of no recent forging."[353] Whatever the case may be, O'Duffy initially refused to fight against the Basque nationalists, though he claims to have later asked Franco to revoke this clause (it seems unlikely that this was ever formally done, and the Irish Brigade ultimately never saw combat against the Basque Nationalists).[354]

As O'Duffy waited for his volunteers to arrive (of which he expected several thousand), he was able to tour the rebel-held parts of the Basque Country, remarking in his journal on November 30 that he stopped in the capital of Araba, "Vittoria" (Gasteiz), and the recently-captured capital of Gipuzkoa, San Sebastián (Donostia) en route to Saint-Jean-de-Luz (Donibane Lohizune)—presumably to meet with Leopold Kerney, who carried out diplomatic activities in this French Basque town until the end of the war.[355] By this point, the only part of the Basque Country not held by the rebels was Biscay and a small portion of western Gipuzkoa.

The Irish Republican Left and the Basque Nationalists

Eoin O'Duffy was not the only Irishman who found himself in the Basque Country upon the outbreak of the civil war. The Republican Congress, "virtually defunct," was revitalized by the Spanish Civil War.[356] It was now faced with the impossible task of convincing the Irish public at large to support the Spanish Second Republic, against the strong red scare current.[357] As McGarry observes, the Irish perception of the Spanish Civil War was inextricably entangled with politics at home, "still poisoned by the legacy of its own civil war."[358] The Republic-aligned and profoundly Catholic Basque Country presented an obvious counterargument to the pervasive view that the war was one "between the forces

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[352] "Ireland in the Argentine," *Irish Times* (May 29, 1925).
[353] "Ireland and Basque Children," *Irish Independent* (Jun. 4, 1937).
[354] O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 199.
[355] Eoin O'Duffy, *Diary: Irish Brigade in Spain*, NLI MS 48, 292/2; Keogh, *Ireland and Europe*, 65-66.
[356] Hanley, "Fighting the Fascists," 25.
[357] Ó Drisceoil, "The 'Irregular and Bolshie Situation'," 56.
[358] Fearghal McGarry, "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War, in *Spanish-Irish Relations Through the Ages: New Historical Perspectives*, eds. Declan Downey and Julio Crespo MacLennan (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008), 220.

of God and the forces of anti-Christ."[359] Republican Congress co-founder George Gilmore was therefore sent to Biscay to search for a Basque Catholic who had made a good impression in Ireland four years earlier—Father Ramón Laborda.

Gilmore flew to Bilbao in August 1936, but poor weather caused the plane to crash-land. He escaped with only a broken leg, though required a stay in the hospital.[360] Afterwards, Gilmore met *Lehendakari* (President) Jose Antonio Agirre in his presidential office, where the young PNV leader relayed to him news of rebel atrocities in occupied areas of the Basque Country, even furnishing him with a list to bring back to Ireland. Gilmore reported: "I was entertained by President Aguirre and members of his United Front Government. A crucifix occupies the most prominent place in his office. He is intensely Nationalist, but is Catholic as well. Priests and nuns walk about the streets of Bilbao, as they have always done."[361] While the PNV might have had little sympathy, ideologically speaking, for Gilmore's Republican Congress, they recognized the value of their position as the "'only argument' that there was any tolerance in the Republican zone toward Catholics."[362]

Agirre was unable to help Gilmore locate Laborda, but recommended he search in Bayonne (Baiona), just across the border, where many had sought refuge from the war (before the capture of eastern Gipuzkoa complicated this route).[363] Gilmore, perhaps still limping, made it to the French Basque Country where he found Laborda, who agreed to come to Ireland in early 1937.

The Debate in Ireland on the Spanish Civil War and the Basques

Back in Ireland, an intense propaganda battle raged between rival supporters of the two sides in the Spanish Civil War. Behind the Francoist rebels was the full weight of the *Irish Independent*, a new organization called the Irish Christian Front, and prominent

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[359] Which, according to TD (Independent) Richard Anthony, was the view held by "the majority of professing Christians in Ireland." See *Dáil Debates* 65 no. 5, Speech 239 (Feb. 19, 1937), https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1937-02-19/12.
[360] Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 511.
[361] "Basque priest exposes 'Independent' lies," *The Worker* (Nov. 21, 1936).
[362] Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 180.
[363] Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 81.

outspoken Catholic clergymen, who all found a receptive audience in the Irish public. The *Irish Independent* had long been a pro-Treaty and rabidly anti-communist paper, which the Basque nationalist visitors of 1932 recognized as being aligned with Cosgrave.[364] Its influence was significant considering it was "the most widely-circulated daily in the country."[365] Stradling also suggests that the chairman of the *Irish Independent*, William Lombard Murphy, and its editor Frank Geary, had a hand in covertly financing O'Duffy's Irish Brigade.[366] The Irish Christian Front was an anti-communist activist organization born in 1936 led by Fine Gael TD, ex-Blueshirt, and vitriolic anti-Semite Patrick Belton, who unsuccessfully pressured the government to officially recognize the government of *Caudillo* Francisco Franco.[367]

Belton travelled to Spain in November 1936, where he extensively surveyed rebel-held territory. He did not oppose Eoin O'Duffy's venture but advised enthusiasts of the cause that their efforts were better spent in Ireland generating support for Franco and securing the recognition of his government.[368] Volunteers were not necessary, he argued, because Franco's victory was guaranteed. Belton personally met with General Franco, who gave him a message to relay to the people of Ireland:

> As a Spaniard, but more particularly as a Galician and a Celt, ties of racial ancestry bind me to Ireland, not only by a common ethnical origin, but also by characteristic qualities of temperament and imagination. The gesture of Irish Catholics in helping, with such splendid self-sacrifice, the work of national salvation which all good [S]paniards have imposed upon themselves as the most sacred of their duties, and the cordial sympathy with which, since the commencement of the war, the Irish people have shown to us, warrant our everlasting gratitude.[369]

Franco's appeal as a 'fellow Celt' worked wonders on Belton, who compared the *Generalísimo* to a leader of a different 'Rising'—Pádraic Pearse.[370]

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[364] Fearghal McGarry, "Irish Newspapers and the Spanish Civil War," *Irish Historical Studies* 33, no. 129 (May 2002): 69; ANV PNV-0219-03.
[365] Keogh, *Ireland and Europe*, 66.
[366] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, 7.
[367] Donal Fallon, "Saint Patrick, Animal Gang and Blueshirts: Anti-Communism in 1930s Dublin," *Dublin Historical Record* 67, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2014): 76.
[368] "Duty of Irishmen," *The Liberator* (Nov. 28, 1936); Likewise, the Communist Party of Ireland told readers that the "most important step is to organise the masses against the fascist cut-throats in our own country." See *The Worker* (Sep. 12, 1936).
[369] "Thanks to People of Ireland," *Irish Press* (Nov. 30, 1936).
[370] "Republicans Trounce Belton and Fascists," *The Worker* (Dec. 12, 1936).

In Ireland, tense debates raged in the Dáil over de Valera's policy of non-intervention. Patrick Belton lambasted the leader of the government, calling Fianna Fáil a 'red' party and demanding: "We have got to say whether we stand for Christ or anti-Christ. That is the issue, nothing else."[371] From the other side of the political spectrum, he was decried as a traitor and a supporter of the fascists in Spain.[372] De Valera astutely announced:

> I am anxious that we should play our part in trying to shorten this conflict in Spain by preventing the export of arms to the combatants and also by preventing recruitment for the various sides who are fighting out in Spain, a fight which, for most of them, at any rate, is not the sort of fight that we think it is, but is a fight for one "ism" against another.[373]

This line of thought was supported by the *Irish Times*, which was critical of both the government and the rebels; nonetheless, it often found itself defending the Republic, stressing its legal legitimacy.[374]

In early November, just before Gilmore's return to Ireland, the Republican Congress organized anti-Franco events around Dublin, now focused on the Basque nationalists.[375] A crowded meeting on November 5 presided over by veteran IRA leader Ernie O'Malley also featured Father Michael O'Flanagan, Peadar O'Donnell, and Ambrose Martin (whose relation to the Republican Congress is unclear).[376] Martin read aloud a statement from the head of the PNV's propaganda apparatus, Juan Ajuriagerra, who thanked "the intention and works of this meeting in Ireland to make known the real cause for which Euzkadi stands, and we see with emotion the sympathy of Republican Ireland for us." George Gilmore also sent a message from Bilbao read by Martin: "Basque people, fighting for national liberty against Fascist invasion, expect sympathy of Republican Ireland. Territory held by Basque government peaceful and like normal.

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[371] *Dáil Debates* 65 no. 4, Speech 419 (Feb. 18, 1937), https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1937-02-18/23.
[372] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, 133.
[373] *Dáil Debates* 65 no. 4, Speech 420 (Feb. 18, 1937), https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1937-02-18/23.
[374] McGarry, "Irish Newspapers and the Spanish Civil War," 72.
[375] Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 83.
[376] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 653-654.

Bilbao has 60,000 refugees from Fascist terror in San Sebastian." The meeting closed with a message to the PNV:

> Republicans assembled in Dublin preparing to launch campaign to make known the truth of your struggle. Repudiate Irish Christian Front and new Fascist bodies, who have misrepresented Irish sentiment. Received your message with enthusiasm and send cordial greetings.[377]

An article in the *Irish Independent* the next day attacked the Republican Congress. Editor Frank Geary wrote that Peadar O'Donnell and his ilk "insulted the name of decent Irish republicanism by their vile suggestion that Irish republicans have any sympathy with the murderers of priests and the destroyers of churches."[378] O'Donnell later referred to Geary as the 'penman-in-chief-to-Fascism'.[379]

Ramón Laborda arrived in Dublin in January, giving his first lecture at a crowded theatre in Dublin. Unable to speak English, a translation of his speech was read by Ambrose Martin. It challenged the red scare, holy war narrative on several different levels. Basque nationalists, simply by virtue of being opposed to Franco, were not communists, Laborda insisted. He covered the religious angle by telling how Francoist rebels carried out extrajudicial executions of Basque priests in captured territory, and how several of the leaders of the military coup were themselves not even religious. As for the claims that the Spanish Republican government was Communist, only 15 of 475 seats in Parliament were held by Communists, he explained.[380] "When I read recently that the Catholics of Ireland were offering men and money to Fascist Franco—the personification of the most brutal imperialism, I exclaimed: It is impossible. Ireland could not do that unless she has been miserably deceived."[381] For a Basque nationalist who had been exposed to frequent exaltations of Ireland and so warmly received in 1932, such news must have been disappointing.

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[377] "Republican meeting in Dublin," *Irish Times* (Nov. 6, 1936).
[378] *Irish Independent* (Nov. 7, 1936) quoted in Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 82-83.
[379] Peadar O'Donnell, *Salud! An Irishman in Spain* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1937), 242-243.
[380] "Basque Priest in Dublin," *Irish Times* (Jan. 18, 1937), 8; While technically true that the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) had 15 seats of the 473 total (not 475), it would be disingenuous to not also mention that the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) held 99, and the Republican Left (IR) held 87. Both parties, among others that constituted the Popular Front, might have been distasteful to those whose opinion he sought to sway.
[381] Ibid.

The Dublin conference spawned a heated exchange in the press via letters to the editor between Laborda and an Irish priest, Father Philip Gannon. “No one ever accused the Basques of the countryside of being Communists,” Gannon wrote, but “through exaggerated local patriotism, they have forgotten the larger interests of the Kingdom of God in their attachment to their petty *Fueros*.”[382] He charged them with “an insane and criminal act” for having extended “a friendly hand to Communism on the battlefield, and, above all, on Spain and on the Christian soil of Biscay and Navarre.”[383] Of course, as discussed, ‘friendly’ would be a mischaracterization of the uneasy relationship between the PNV and the Popular Front government, but the finer points of politics escaped Father Gannon. He concluded:

> Hence, however much we admire and like the little ethnic group which has maintained itself since pre-history in its picturesque surroundings, we cannot lend them our sympathy as long as they are united in arms with their present allies. Our sense of proportion forces us to set all Spain before a part and the cause of Christ before the *Fueros* even of Father Laborda’s romantic highlands.[384]

Laborda responded, drawing a parallel between Ireland and the Basque Country to highlight Gannon’s hypocrisy: “Father Gannon will excuse me if I do not take him seriously as a judge of the Catholic people and priests of Euzkadi. But Basque nationalists readily admit their opposition to the unity of Spain, which is to us as the unity of the British Empire is to Irish Republicans.”[385] Furthermore, he again asserted that the Irish people had been misled, and some of them had been recruited by Fascists “to join Franco in a war on our small nation.”[386] However, it might have been more accurate, and painful to admit, that they had been recruited by Navarrese Carlists rather than Fascists.

Laborda continued to give speeches in Dublin, accompanied by socialist republicans and veteran of Basque-Irish affairs, Ambrose Martin. He and Martin sought to demonstrate the similarity of the Basque and Irish struggles for independence. Laborda concluded one overview of the conflict with: “This is something of what is happening in

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[382] P. J. Gannon, “Letters to the Editor: The Basque Problem” *Irish Times* (Jan. 23, 1937).
[383] P. J. Gannon, “The Basque Problem,” *Irish Times* (Jan. 26, 1937).
[384] Ibid.
[385] Rev. Ramon de Laborda, “Letters to the Editor: The Basque Problem,” *Irish Times* (Jan. 25, 1937).
[386] Ibid.

the Basque country, whose history shows so many close parallels with Irish history, and which is now fighting as Ireland has done for its freedom from an alien race. Let us hope for the happiness of both in their longed-for liberty. Amen."[387] Martin appealed to audiences with exaggerated stories of how Basque nationalists "helped the Irish people in their struggle for liberty."[388]

Laborda and his entourage travelled to Belfast to speak at Queen's University. The first lecture, presided over by Victor Halley of the Socialist Party of Northern Ireland, did not go well.[389] Speakers were interrupted by cries from the audience of "Up Franco!" and "What about the murder of nuns?"[390] Some thirty police officers at the event physically ejected the furious hecklers, but O'Donnell and Laborda were banned from speaking again at the university.[391] As Seán Cronin notes, "it was difficult to put the case against Franco in any part of Ireland in the spring of 1937."[392]

Laborda's visit to Ireland ultimately had little tangible effect on Irish public opinion. Laborda expressed his disappointment and was evidently frustrated by the difficulty of making the case for the Basque government in a country he expected would readily understand. He called the Irish clergy "partisans of Fascism,"[393] and probably cared little for the politics of his far-left acolytes. Apparently, however, his visit generated enough controversy to warrant a response from O'Duffy, with a Basque-Irish parallel of his own:

> That the Basques—Catholics for the most part—allied themselves with the avowed destroyers of their religion and all the traditions held most sacred by them, has caused much confused thinking in Ireland and has been seized as a weapon to use against the Nationalist cause. It has been said that the Basques are as much entitled to complete independence from Spain as the Irish are to independence from England. But there is no similarity. The Basques are no more entitled to partition from Spain than six counties of Ulster are to partition from Ireland. Their claim is equally absurd.[394]

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[387] Ramon Laborda, "Rebellion in Spain and the Basque Country" *The National Student* (n.d.) quoted in *Euzko Deya* no. 33 (Mar. 21, 1937).
[388] "Reds' Irish Friends," *Irish Independent* (Dec. 4, 1936); "A Dublin Meeting," *Irish Independent* (Nov. 6, 1936).
[389] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 654.
[390] "Student Hecklers Ejected," *Irish Press* (Mar. 25, 1937).
[391] John Bowyer Bell, "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939," *Studia Hibernica* 9 (1969): 156.
[392] Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 87.
[393] "Student Hecklers Ejected," *Irish Press* (Mar. 25, 1937).
[394] O'Duffy, *Crusade in Spain*, 195.

De Valera and his cabinet followed news of rebel persecution of the Basques with interest and were well aware that the Spanish Civil War was not a battle between Crusaders and forces of the Antichrist.[395] Moreover, de Valera was of course familiar with Basque nationalism, and had already expressed his sympathy in the past. However, Laborda's presence in Ireland made his administration uncomfortable in light of its neutral stance. Due to a diplomatic oversight and dishonesty on Laborda's part, his visa application for entry into Ireland, ostensibly for the purpose of "giving lectures on Basque music," was approved. The embassy that issued the visa was chastised, as Laborda's activities "caused embarrassment to the Government," and they noted "it may be necessary to request him to leave Saorstat Eireann."[396]

Overall, the socialist republican concentration on the 'Republic of Euzkadi' was tactically wise, even if mostly ineffective. The plight of the irrefutably Catholic Basque nationalists demonstrated that the war in Spain was not as straightforward as the pro-Franco forces within Ireland sought to portray it. However, their primary aim was not to generate support for the Basque nationalist war effort, but for that of the Republic more broadly. It was ironic then that the example they thought would resonate most with the Irish public was the Republic's least enthusiastic ally. Their coverage of this front was disingenuous in two ways. First, Irish socialist republicans ignored the conservative character of mainstream Basque nationalism and the fact that the PNV had run in an electoral alliance with the political right against their current allies only a few years earlier. For the purpose of their propaganda it befitted them to not report that the PNV waged an internal war against radical leftist elements in its own territory which included dissident socialist militiamen and anarcho-syndicalists, who vandalized and burned down some churches and carried out extrajudicial executions.[397] Second, the so-called 'Basque oasis' which they used to cast doubt on the reports of atrocities in Spain was exceptionally stable socio-politically, thus making any extrapolations suspect.[398] For instance, one audience

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[395] Keogh, *Ireland and Europe*, 79-80.
[396] Letter from Sean Murphy to Irish Legation in Paris (Mar. 6, 1937) NAI DFA 3/102/43.
[397] Helen Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 242; de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 176-177; Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 180; For example, the conservative and pro-Franco *Irish Examiner* reported that "over two hundred were killed in a fight between Basques and anarchists in Bilbao" (Jan. 12, 1937).
[398] de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 176.

member asked Ambrose Martin to talk about "the Catholic element in Madrid and other parts of Spain," to which he replied "that it was difficult for him to deal with anything that was happening outside the Basque Country."[399] To be sure, Franco supporters overstated and misrepresented atrocities behind Republican lines, but anticlerical violence was still common, even if it was not institutionally sanctioned. Historian Paul Preston notes that over 30% of monks in Republican territory were killed, and that "[c]hurches and convents were sacked and burned everywhere in the Republican zone except the Basque Country."[400]

Volunteering in the Basque Country

There is conflicting evidence regarding a plan to send volunteers to fight in the *Euzko Gudarostea*. Historians Santiago De Pablo and Ludger Mees claim that "elements of the IRA," including "military leaders" were prepared to aid or fight for the Basque government.[401] The story told by the contemporary press indicates otherwise. After Ramón Laborda's first speech, the Republican Congress sent a telegram to the Basque government, signed by Peadar O'Donnell: "Great assembly in Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, presided by Father O'Flanagan, Ramón Laborda heard with enormous enthusiasm. I send greetings and promise propaganda."[402]

The Basque government acknowledged the receipt of a telegram "from the President of the Republican Congress, offering help to the Government of Euzkadi."[403] However, the Republican Congress felt the need to clarify its intent:

> It was learned in Dublin last night, says the Press Association, that the message—apparently referred to by the Council of Defence at Bilbao as an offer of assistance—was a congratulatory one only. It was sent from the meeting on Sunday last, at which a priest from the Basque Government, Father Laborda, gave a lecture, says the Agency. A telegram of goodwill was signed by Mr. Peadar O'Donnell, as Chairman, merely for credential purposes. His signature, it was stated last night, had no other significance.[404]

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[399] "A Dublin Meeting," *Irish Independent* (Nov. 6, 1936).
[400] Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust*, 235.
[401] de Pablo and Mees, *El péndulo patriótico*, 204.
[402] "Del Gobierno de Euzkadi," *Tierra Vasca* no. 35 (Jan. 23, 1937).
[403] "Un saludo de Irlanda al Gobierno Vasco," *Euzko Deya*, no. 18 (Jan. 28, 1937).
[404] "Dublin message to Bilbao," *Irish Press* (Jan. 25, 1937).

According to Cronin, George Gilmore returned with word that "the Basques apparently did not need fighting men."[405]

Further complicating this question is the fact that one Irishman did in fact fight in the *Euzko Gudarostea*. A young Dubliner, Jack Prendergast, was the only Irishman to fight alongside the Basque nationalists.[406] Upon the outbreak of the war, Prendergast, having some knowledge of the Basques, travelled on his own accord to the Basque delegation in London to volunteer to fight.[407] He emphasized to the Irish press that he had fought in the Basque army—not the International Brigades—"until the last inch of Basque territory had been taken."[408] He received training in the Basque Country and then fought in an anti-tank mortar and artillery battalion under the command of the PNV, rising to the rank of captain.[409] When captured in 1937, the Irish embassy feared he would be executed, but Leopold Kerney successfully intervened to secure his release.[410]

However, the claim of de Pablo and Mees seems to be based on internal documents of the Basque government. In November 1936, a Basque politician based in Paris wrote a memorandum to the government in Bilbao after the visit of two Irish republicans, Peadar O'Donnell and the other unknown. The message encouraged the government to send an official delegate to the Republican Congress pro-Basque rally, at which Ambrose Martin would ultimately present himself as their delegate. Most interestingly, O'Donnell apparently discussed aid in the form of espionage and military volunteers from the IRA for the Basque government.[411] Soler rightfully notes that this was "more rhetorical than real."[412]

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[405] Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 83.
[406] Sam McGrath, "The story of Jack Prendergast: The only known Irish soldier of the Basque army," in *Gernika Then and Now*, 28-29.
[407] Armaindegui, "Sullivan Prendergast, el gudari irlandés del 'Saseta'," *Alderdi*, no. 91 (Apr. 17. 1986); R. Armandegi, "Cartas al director: Recordando a Sullivan Prendergast: El gudari irlandes," *Deia* (Oct. 8, 1998).
[408] [Jack] Sullivan de Prendergast, "Spain and the Basques," *Evening Herald* (Mar. 16, 1939).
[409] Francisco Manuel Vargas Alonso, "El Partido Nacionalista Vasco en Guerra: Euzko Gudarostea (1936-1937)," *Vasconia* 31 (2001): 308.
[410] *DIFP, Vol. 5*, Document 180, letter from Leopold Kerney to Joseph Walshe (May 2, 1938), http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume5/1938/2326.htm.
[411] Centro de Patrimonio Documental de Euskadi (IRARGI) GE-0026-01, cited in Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 513-514.
[412] Soler Parício, "Irlanda y la guerra civil española," 513.

There was further Basque-Irish correspondence in 1938 between Michael Lennon, the kind host of the Basque visitors in 1932, and Txomin Epalza, the aforementioned PNV member who probably penned the notes on that same visit to Dublin. Lennon advised him that *Lehendakari* Agirre should personally reach out to de Valera and arrange for official Basque diplomatic representation in Ireland. With the note came attached a brief message of unknown authorship which read:

> Person in Ireland well-regarded by [Basque] Nationalist Party declares that a pro-Basque council has been founded which is prepared to work on anything it is asked. It can carry out a great deal of work on propaganda, [obtaining] foodstuffs, money, etc. The Irish market is one of the principal suppliers of cattle, eggs, and potatoes in England. Elements of the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and Fianna Fail (de Valera party) await with interest and anxiety precise and concrete instructions to begin working on whatever they are sent. This could also include sending military leaders.[413]

With all of this evidence considered, we can ask—how serious was the prospect of Irish aid for the Basque government? If the Basque government was willing to let the lone Jack Prendergast serve, why did the other offers of aid never materialize? And why did the Basque government rely on Ambrose Martin to represent them rather than an actual party official?

First, the Basque government was actively seeking British support throughout the war, and perhaps calculated that intimate ties with Irish republicans would damage their more important relationship with Britain. Second, as has been already indicated, the PNV deeply distrusted radical leftist elements at home. One British official observed: “The Basques, I have the impression, fear more ‘Red’ aggression from Santander and Asturias than the danger from the Military. To prevent infiltration of undesirable elements from the West they have instituted a rigorous control of their Santander frontier.”[414] It is therefore conceivable that they might have had reservations about importing militant socialist republicans from Ireland, whereas a single, politically unaffiliated Irishman might have been permitted.

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[413] IRARGI GE-0052-03, cited in Soler Parício, “Irlanda y la guerra civil española,” 518-519.
[414] PRO [Public Record Office] 1937 W 4274/1/41 cited in Payne, *Basque Nationalism*, 199.

Some Irishmen, however, did travel to Spain to fight for the Republic—about 150 volunteers headed by Frank Ryan did so.[415] It was in no small part a counteraction against the mobilization of the pro-Franco Irish Brigade: "It is also a reply to the intervention of Irish Fascism in the war against the Spanish republic which, if unchallenged would remain a disgrace on our people," declared Frank Ryan.[416] However, they were significantly outnumbered by Eoin O'Duffy's 700-strong force (somewhat short of his original promise of 5000!).[417] On one occasion, the two expeditions nearly encountered each other in combat outside of Madrid.[418] Still poisoned by the legacy of civil war politics, "for some the Spanish Civil War must have been pre-eminently a war within the Irish Republican Army," writes Hugh Thomas.[419]

Eoin O'Duffy's troops served alongside the Carlists for much of their short-lived crusade, which came to an inglorious end in the Spring of 1937 as the rebels renewed their siege of Biscay. One volunteer recounted how their Navarrese comrades "were the finest soldiers anyone could meet, and treated the members of the Brigade as brothers [...] Carlist troops did duty in the front line during the day, and members of the Irish Brigade relieved them at night."[420] They admired the Carlists so much that some officers sought to formally integrate the Irish Brigade, then in the Spanish Foreign Legion, with the Requeté.[421] Some of the men returned home with red Carlist berets—a Basque souvenir—which they might have worn instead of their forage caps issued by Nazi Germany.[422]

The Irish Perception of the Basque Nationalist War Effort

[415] Keogh, *Ireland and Europe*, 80.
[416] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, 138.
[417] McGarry, *Eoin O'Duffy*, 289-292.
[418] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, 175.
[419] Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), 592.
[420] "The Irish Brigade returns home: General O'Duffy annoyed with police," *Irish Times* (Jun. 22, 1937).
[421] Stradling, *The Irish and the Spanish Civil War*, 83.
[422] "The Irish Brigade returns home: General O'Duffy annoyed with police," *Irish Times* (Jun. 22, 1937); *DIFP, Vol. 5*, Document no. 26, letter from John Dulanty to Joseph Walshe (Feb. 26, 1937), http://www.difp.ie/docs/Volume5/1937/2172.htm.

According to McGarry, enthusiasm for Franco in Ireland did not truly begin to wane until the bombing of Gernika.[423] This small Basque town, incinerated by the German *Luftwaffe*, was the first in history to be totally destroyed by aerial bombardment, and quickly became an icon of the Spanish Civil War.[424] The reasoning behind the infamous attack has been much debated by historians. The choice to use incendiary bombs, to strike on the weekly market day when the civilian population swelled, and above all to target Gernika, the symbolic heart of Basque nationalism, indicate to many that it was an attack intended to maximize civilian casualties and demoralize the besieged Basque nationalists as Franco's forces prepared for the final push into Bilbao.[425]

The reaction in the Irish media was predictable. The *Irish Independent* first reported that it was not bombarded, but if it was, hypothetically, it would have been justifiable because it was a legitimate military target. The true culprits, it argued, were Russian-ordered arsonists.[426] It later promoted the claim that it was a false flag attack perpetrated by the Basque government, who destroyed the town with dynamite.[427] The *Irish Press* (founded by Éamon de Valera in 1931 and reflecting the Fianna Fáil party line), quoting journalists who witnessed the event first-hand, reported that German bombers had killed over 800 civilians in "the most appalling air raid in the history of modern warfare."[428] The *Irish Times* stated:

> After the events of the last few weeks in Northern Spain it has become exceedingly difficult to maintain the thesis that General Franco is fighting a holy war. The destruction of Guernica has horrified the world. This town was the ancient capital of the Basques, hallowed by a thousand years of national and religious memories, and it was wiped out of existence in a few hours by the most ruthless air raid in the history of warfare.[429]

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[423] McGarry, "Ireland and the Spanish Civil War," 227.
[424] Preston, *The Spanish Civil War*, 270.
[425] For a summary of this debate see Herbert Rutledge Southworth, *Guernica! Guernica! A Study of Journalism, Diplomacy, Propaganda, and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 371-386. For a recent, meticulously-researched account that effectively settles the debate regarding the supposed strategic value of the Bombing of Gernika, see Chapter 4 ("An Analysis of the Attack") of Xabier Irujo, *Gernika, 1937: The Market Day Massacre* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015).
[426] ''It was not bombarded'," *Irish Independent* (May 4, 1937).
[427] "Bombing of Guernica," *Irish Independent* (Mar. 21, 1938).
[428] "800 killed in history's biggest air raid," *Irish Press* (Apr. 28, 1937).
[429] "The Agony of Spain," *Irish Times* (May 3, 1937).

Once again, the Basques occupied a key position in Ireland's awareness of the Spanish Civil War. As Bilbao fell to the rebels, tens of thousands of refugees poured out of the city under the protection of the British Navy. Some 4000 Basque children were brought to England, while Ireland "did not feel it had the Basques on its conscience."[430] Among these refugees were the wife and five children of Eli Gallastegi.[431]

Gallastegi fled Bilbao a week before its capture by the Francoists.[432] He left for Paris, and from there applied for a visa to enter Ireland, vouched for by his old friend Ambrose Martin.[433] The trading operation run by Gallastegi and Martin continued until the fall of Bilbao, however, Martin's Irish-Iberian Trading Company had been unable to send money to the city since the outbreak of the war. Gallastegi thus had a considerable sum of money waiting for him to collect in Dublin.[434] He and his family moved to Gibbstown (or Baile Ghib), a small Gaeltacht (a legally-recognized primarily Irish-speaking district) in County Meath where Martin owned land.[435] Their large home became something of an informal Basque museum, where Irish visitors could learn about Basque culture and history.[436] His children all became fluent Irish speakers, and the exiled *Gudari* lived in Ireland for the next 21 years.[437]

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[430] Basque Children of '27 Association, "Who we are…" https://www.basquechildren.org; Cronin, *Frank Ryan*, 118.
[431] Stewart Reddin, "'Irish citizens of Basque origin': The story of Ireland's Basque refugees," in *Gernika Then and Now*, 16.
[432] Renobales, *Jagi-Jagi*, 330.
[433] Visa applications for Elia Gallastegui [sic] and Cosme Orramantia Elorrieta, NAI DFA 102/176.
[434] Leach, *Fugitive Ireland*, 57.
[435] Reddin, "'Irish citizens of Basque origin'," 17.
[436] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 241-242.
[437] Ibid., 128.

Figure 5: Ambrose Martin (left) with Eli Gallastegi (right) and his children in Gibbstown

Image courtesy of Barra McFeely

Throughout the war, even after their defeat, the Basque government maintained a strong presence abroad. From London and Paris, it published *Euzko Deya* (Basque Cry), a biweekly publication with many articles aimed explicitly at the Irish public. Among its consultants was Jack Prendergast, who moved to Paris after his service in the *Euzko*

Gudarostea to assist with Basque propaganda.[438] *Euzko Deya* was also sent to the Irish embassy in France, which wrote:

> I have been receiving regularly every week for several months past, a periodical entitled "EUZKO-DEYA" which is a Basque nationalist propaganda sheet published and distributed in Paris. Copies have been sent to me without request or payment and I assume that copies are being sent in the same way to all Diplomatic Missions etc. etc. in Paris and in France.[439]

Its very first issue on November 29, 1936 featured a lengthy article in English titled: "From the basques [sic] of Euzkadi to the Catholics of Ireland." It reported on Francoist executions of Basque priests and addressed the Irish public: "As Basque Nationalists, as defenders of God in democracy and liberty, we want the world to know of such crimes. We once more appeal to the Catholics of the world, and to you,—most specially—, Irish patriot, as there exists some similarity between you and us."[440] It also directly addressed Eoin O'Duffy: "Never mix up politics and religion. And never allow anybody to do so. Do you hear us, O'Duffy? [...] Beware O'Duffy!! Mind your steps, Christian Front!! You had better learn enough [about] our problems before making politics."[441] Many issues followed the events of Laborda's tour in Ireland, ultimately remarking that the "Basque and Catholic propagandist had to leave Ireland, leaving sensible people with the conviction that his people were right, and leaving right-wing circles a bad memory."[442] Like Laborda, the frustration of the writers of *Euzko Deya* was palpable: "To tell the truth, there is nobody more painfully experienced than an Irishman to talk about civil wars, and nobody who seems better disposed than an Irish Catholic to understand the Basque Catholics. But Father Gannon says not a word about all that."[443]

A journalist from the *Irish Times* interviewed Jose Ignacio Lizaso, the PNV delegate in London, who told him:

> Oh! Ireland! Ireland! What a disappointment you have been to the Basque people! We have watched your struggle for liberty. We have followed your people with our heartfelt sympathy and love. Our hearts were raised at your

[438] McGrath, "The story of Jack Prendergast," 29.
[439] Irish legation in Paris to Seasamh uasal Breathnach (Mar. 25, 1937), NAI DFA 3/102/43.
[440] "From the basques of Euzkadi to the Catholics of Ireland," *Euzko Deya*, no. 1 (Nov. 29, 1936).
[441] Ibid.
[442] "O'Duffy revient de la croisade," *Euzko Deya* no. 65 (Jul. 18, 1937).
[443] "Le R. P. Gannon continue à écrire…," *Euzko Deya*, no. 85 (Dec. 5, 1937).

> victories, and we believed that the spirit of freedom had spread through your land. Had we been asked what country in the whole world we might depend on for sympathy and understanding, I should have at once placed Ireland as the first who would give us courage and hope. And then comes the news that an Irish regiment has arrived to fight against us.[444]

This sentiment was echoed by the Vice-President of the Basque government in exile, Manuel Irujo, many years later:

> Ireland has been for us [...] a nation that defrauded us. Us Basques were sincere admirers of the Irish. We followed with respect, and even admiration, their fight for national liberty. We were sincerely happy every time that the people of Ireland triumphantly advanced a step on the path to its demands. Like a great number of Basques, the Irish people were nationalist and fervently Catholic. That admiration lasted until our war. It seemed that the Irish would therefore effortlessly understand the Basque situation. That was not the case. Ireland was one of the first countries to offer assistance to our enemies, sending a Legion to fight in its ranks [...] Earlier, in international conferences, Ireland was one of the most reluctant countries in recognizing the justice of the cause of democracy in Spain.[445]

Indeed, for Manuel Irujo it was especially difficult to understand why Irish solidarity with Basque nationalism was not more pronounced. On a later occasion, he wrote a short essay on Basque-Irish parallels, claiming that there were "obvious coincidences, pronounced in the parallelism of the current situation of the religious, social, and political order."[446]

The Basque disappointment in Ireland highlights the naïveté of the assumption that the Irish people saw the same affinity with the Basques as vice versa. Most sympathy with the Basque national cause was overridden by the distaste for the Spanish Second Republic, and most Irish people did not understand the complexities of the Basque nationalist alliance with the Popular Front. Basque nationalist propaganda sought to make their small nation more relatable by drawing parallels with Ireland and portraying their cause as 'fighting for freedom' just as the Irish had done against the British. However, it took the destruction of their historic cultural capital to have any notable effect on Irish

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[444] K. O'B., "Basque Point of View," *Irish Times* (Jun. 15, 1937).
[445] Xabier Landaburu, "La república irlandesa," in *Obras completas de F. Javier de Landaburu* (Bilbao: Idatz Ekintza, 1984), 219-220.
[446] Manuel Irujo, "Euzkadi-Irlanda" (1959). Manuel Irujo fonds, Eusko Ikaskuntza, http://www.eusko-ikaskuntza.eus/PDFFondo/irujo/3035.pdf.

public opinion. De Valera, while probably sympathetic, could not see the Basque cause as sufficient reason to alter his stance of neutrality.

The Basques' most ready allies were socialist republicans, but their sympathy did not extend to any serious consideration of material aid. This is a further example of the incongruence that sometimes characterized the interaction of Basque and Irish nationalists—the most developed relationship in this case was between the moderate Christian democrat PNV and the fringe leftist element of Irish republicanism. Moreover, it is interesting to consider that some Basque nationalists had personally met soon-to-be Fine Gael leader William T. Cosgrave in 1932, who they noted as "a friend of the Spaniards" after an uncomfortable interview with him. Their positive interactions with Eoin O'Duffy around that same time might go some way in explaining his initial refusal to fight on the Basque front four years later. The good impression that Father Ramón Laborda made at this time proved significant a few years later when George Gilmore trekked through the Basque Country to find him.

There is an irony in Ireland's relation to the Spanish Civil War in that O'Duffy was seduced by Carlists in Navarre while his bitter socialist rivals at home focused heavily on the Basque nationalists. The old civil war rivalry in Ireland found itself embroiled in what could be seen as a civil war in the Basque Country. As evidenced by the comments of two PNV officials, however, the Irish Brigade made more of an impact than did the Republican Congress on the Basque memory of their relationship with Ireland during the Spanish Civil War. Nonetheless, this episode would be forgotten by the next generation of Basque nationalists, who continued to look to Ireland for inspiration.

EPILOGUE: "The Failure of the Last Generation"

From practically the outset of the Spanish Civil War, the Basque government developed crucial contacts in British political circles.[447] In August 1936, two Basque nationalists arrived at the British embassy in Paris to float the idea of "British protection for a hypothetical Basque government."[448] In 1938, Luis Arana wrote a letter to the British government, proposing

> that England in close collaboration with France, [...] should protect the formation and once formed become the protectors of two States to be established between the Pyrenees and the River Ebro. One of those political States or Republics should be Basque, under the denomination of Euzkadi and enjoy the effective protectorate of England. The other one should be a Latin Catalan-Aragonese State and protected by France.[449]

Luis Arana's brother Sabino had predicted, 36 years earlier, that the "independence of the Basque Country, under the protection of England, will be a happy fact in the not-too-distant future." It seems that for some, that dream had never died.

The defeated Basque government-in-exile remained hopeful that a Basque state could still be established. The Second World War was seen as such an opportunity, with the expectation that the Allies would topple the Franco regime. Jose Ignacio Lizaso wrote to the British Foreign Office in September 1939 that "the Basque Government are anxious to assist Great Britain and France in every way possible in their fight for a free Europe."[450] Such sentiment lies in stark difference to his comments on Ireland. Overall, British officials were fond of the Basque nationalists: "Speaking generally, the Basques are the most reliable of the Spanish citizens, and the leaders of their delegation, both here and in France, are well-known to me, and I regard them as completely trustworthy. Their whole political outlook is very similar to our own," wrote one of their contacts.[451]

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[447] Xabier Irujo, "Nature, Significance, and Scope of the International Dimension of the Program of the Basque Government-in-Exile, 1937-1960," in *The International Legacy of Lehendakari Jose A. Agirre's Government*, ed. Xabier Irujo and Mari Jose Olaziregi (Reno: Center for Basque Studies Press, 2017), 65.

[448] Ugalde Zubiri, *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco*, 548.

[449] Letter from Luis Arana to the British government first sent in Spanish on August 2, 1938. English translation sent on November 10, 1938. NA FO 371/22699, W14873/14873/41.

[450] Letter from Jose Ignacio Lizaso to M. S. Williams, Foreign Office (Sep. 13, 1939), NA FO 930/148.

[451] Letter from Mr. Cowan to Colonel Bridge [?], FO 930/148.

Ironically, while Luis Arana was campaigning for British protectorate status for the Basque Country, Ireland was distancing itself from Britain as much as possible. On the eve of the Second World War (in which Ireland remained neutral), Éamon de Valera drafted a new constitution to replace that of the Irish Free State. Following a referendum, it was passed in July 1937. The position of Governor-General was replaced by a Presidency, and *Taoiseach* (Chief) was the new title for the President of the Executive Council. The Irish state was to be referred to simply as Ireland, or 'Éire', which *de jure* consisted "of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas"—an irredentist claim that it would not relinquish until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.[452]

The PNV remained enamoured with Britain even after the Second World War. When Ireland unilaterally declared itself a Republic in 1949, Basque Vice-President Xabier Landaburu—who earlier lamented that Ireland had 'defrauded' the Basques—remarked that the Commonwealth proved itself "a patent example of respect for democracy."[453] Other PNV officials, including *Lehendakari* Agirre, were based in New York, where they hoped to convince the Americans to overthrow the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. Historian Ludger Mees remarks that the "unrealistic, even blind confidence in 'American friends', who were eventually supposed to pay in return for the Basques' support during the war, over the years turned out to be a strategic dead end."[454]

Their efforts, while noble, returned nothing. In 1951, in the context of the Cold War, the United States sided with the unquestionably anti-communist Franco regime.[455] A new generation of Basque nationalists, frustrated with the failures of their forefathers, became more receptive to violence. While the moderate nationalists of the PNV continued to laud Britain, radical Basque nationalists again made contact with some of its most avowed enemies. In 1960, four young Basque PNV dissenters received guerrilla training in Ireland from the IRA, then in the midst of its unsuccessful Border Campaign (1956-1962). One of them was Iker Gallastegi, whose father *Gudari* organized this historic and deeply symbolic

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[452] *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (1937), Article 2; This article was amended as part of the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.
[453] Xabier Landaburu, "La lección de la Commonwealth," *Alderdi* no. 26 (May 1949), 17.
[454] Ludger Mees, "Transnational Nationalism: The Basque Exile in Barcelona-Paris-New York (1936-1946)," in *The International Legacy of Lehendakari Jose A. Agirre's Government*, 177.
[455] Joseba Zulaika, *That Old Bilbao Moon: The Passion and Resurrection of a City* (Reno: University of Reno Press, 2014), 42-43.

meeting, thanks to his contacts with important figures in the nationalist movements in both Ireland and the Basque Country.[456] The cleft between moderate and radical within Basque nationalism was yet again reflected in their respective appeals to Britain or Ireland.

Eli Gallastegi himself remained in Ireland, where he had friends in high places,[457] until 1958. His old friend, the mysterious Ambrose Martin, was badly injured after being hit by a car in Dublin, not far from the office of his Irish-Iberian Trading Company. Martin left Ireland in 1939 to stay at his impressive chateau on the coast of Brittany—one of the several properties he purchased in the late 1930s—ostensibly to recover from his injuries. For reasons uncertain, Martin was unable to return to Spain, and personal matters kept him away from Ireland for several years. He spent the duration of the Second World War in Nazi-occupied France, in his seaside fortress not far from Quimper. Locals from the area recount that many Basques fleeing the Franco dictatorship found refuge in the chateau.[458] Both Ambrose Martin and Eli Gallastegi passed away in 1974.

In 1961, the exiled Basque government in Paris invited Iker Gallastegi and a few of his comrades to a conference to discuss their grievances with the PNV. Iker Gallastegi argued that only through armed struggle could the Basque Country be made free, given the political context. To the audience of PNV politicians, whom he saw as passive, ineffective relics of a past generation, the young Gallastegi said: “War is a terrible thing, but it is not an evil thing.”[459] The organizer of the conference, Manuel Irujo, denounced the turn to ‘useless violence’ with a quotation from Éamon de Valera, and responded in the official journal of the PNV: “Only the fascists say that war ‘is not an evil thing’.“[460] But

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[456] Eugenio Ibarzabal, “Asi nació ETA,” *Muga* (Jun. 1, 1979), 89, in Pako Sudupe, *Txillardegiren borroka abertzalea* (Donostia: Elkar, 2016), n.p.

[457] Such as Easter Rising veteran, member of the First Dáil, and the last Governor-General of the Irish Free State, Domhnall Ua Buachalla, who was sympathetic with the Basque nationalist cause (see Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 237); Other contacts must have included figures in the IRA.

[458] Correspondence with Barra McFeely; While anecdotal, we might also consider one tantalizing piece of evidence: Manu Egileor, the founder and first editor of *Aberri*, president of *Euzko Gaztedija* in 1916, and once-close ally of Eli Gallastegi, travelled to Ireland on a fishing vessel from Brittany in 1940. See *Edición crítica Diaro de José Antonio Agirre* by Iñaki Goiogana (Sabino Arana Fundazioa, 2010), 8n40, http://www.agirreinberlin.eus/wp-content/uploads/Edicion-Critica-Diario-Castellano.pdf.

[459] Fernández Soldevilla, *La voluntad del gudari*, 106-107.

[460] Manuel Irujo, “Patriotas y gamberros,” *Alderdi* no. 182 (May, 1962) in *Escritos en Alderdi: 1961-1974* (Bilbao: EAJ-PNV, 1981), 45; A few years later Eli Gallastegi wrote a series of lengthy vitriolic letters to his once-friend Irujo, denouncing the ‘shameful’ article that ‘defamed’ his son and demanded a retraction. Irujo responded, poking at his reputation as having fled the war and his tardy response: “In the Nirvana of

in fact, unknown to Irujo, it was a quotation from 1915, from none other than Pádraic Pearse, whose words found resonance in the Basque Country in 1916, and again in 1961—"War is a terrible thing, but war is not an evil thing. It is the things that make war necessary that are evil. [...] When war comes to Ireland, she must welcome it as she would welcome the Angel of God. And she will."[461]

Other Basque nationalists did indeed welcome war. A small student group known as *Ekin* (Act), founded in 1952, renamed itself *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA—Basque Country and Freedom) in 1959. It was at least in some part the 'failure of the last generation', to quote Pearse, that gave rise to ETA. Over the next five decades, this notorious organization claimed more than 850 lives in its fight for an independent Basque Country.

your solitude, the contemplative life has removed you from any sense of moderation, dear Elias." Letter from Manuel Irujo to Elias Gallastegi (Dec. 31, 1964). Manuel Irujo fonds, Eusko Ikaskuntza, http://www.eusko-ikaskuntza.eus/PDFFondo/irujo/26351.pdf.

[461] Pearse, "Peace and the Gael" (Dec. 1915), in *Political Writings and Speeches*, 217.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the relationship between the Basque and Irish nationalist movements from 1895 to 1939 is by no means one of 'natural solidarity' nor is it easily characterizable by any other monolithic label. The internal dynamics of Basque and Irish politics which shaped their understanding of each other were sometimes prejudicial to sympathy and solidarity. Basque-Irish relations in this period were marked by numerous contradictions and ironies. A concerned British diplomat remarked in the early 1920s that many in Spain "believe[d] that the Irish question [was] fundamentally a religious question," which worked in favour of the Sinn Féin propagandists.[462] It was a similarly simplistic understanding of the Spanish Civil War in Ireland that worked against the Basque nationalist efforts to garner sympathy there.

On the other hand, there were moments of genuine solidarity. Many young Basques were captivated by the 1916 Easter Rising and would go on to play prominent roles in Basque nationalist politics. The Rising was discussed, studied, and commemorated by Basque nationalists for decades to follow. Basque nationalists sporadically went to Ireland over the years, in pilgrimage-like visits, returning with high praise. Some Irish nationalists found the Basque Country alluring as well. Jack Prendergast left his life in Dublin behind to join a PNV battalion in the *Euzko Gudarostea* and helped Basque propagandists in Paris produce articles for the Irish public. Michael Lennon—veteran of the Rising, and a scholar of Spain—welcomed the visiting group of Basque nationalists in 1932, and remained in contact with the PNV for several years later, hoping for an official Basque embassy in Ireland.

The vibrant Eli Gallastegi propagated the ideals and lessons of Irish republicanism in his speeches, in *Por la libertad vasca*, and in journals such as *Aberri* and *Jagi-Jagi*. Gallastegi set up the trading company *Euzkerin* to aid Ireland during the Economic War with Britain after Éamon de Valera came to power, importing Irish eggs and livestock (and stout). His fascination with Ireland culminated in his emigration to Gibbstown, where he raised a family of multilingual Basque and Irish-speakers.

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[462] Dermot Keogh, "The Origins of the Irish Foreign Service in Europe (1919-1922), *Études irlandaises* 7 (1982): 156.

On the other end of *Euzkerin*'s trading operation was Ambrose Martin's Irish-Iberian Trading Company, the very existence of which was probably owed to his close personal relationship with de Valera and other figures such as Leopold Kerney, then serving as the Irish Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. Martin was remembered as a foundational figure in the Basque nationalist women's group, *Emakume Abertzale Batza*. He also joined *mendigoxales* in the Basque hills, probably teaching them guerrilla tactics. How did a young, small-town Irish-Argentinian come to be so familiar with the Basques? The interaction of the Basque and Irish diasporas (in Argentina or elsewhere) is an avenue for further research. The details of Martin's exposure to Basque culture in Suipacha and/or the surrounding area are uncertain, but I would offer a potential connection: One of Martin's closest Basque associates was Tomas Anabeitia, whom he regarded as "a great personal friend."[463] Anabeitia was the manager of *Euzkerin* in Bilbao, and visited Martin in Ireland on many occasions. In 1936, Anabeitia married a young Irishwoman, Teresa Ryan. Ambrose Martin was the best man at the wedding, and hosted the reception at his home in Dundrum.[464] A Garda intelligence investigation of Martin in 1940 indicated that Anabeitia "left hurriedly for Argentine [sic] about the time the Martins left Dundrum. Himself and Martin parted on extremely bad terms although they must have been intimate friends for a long time—*probably in Argentine* [sic] and Spain before coming to Ireland."[465] Did the friendship of Anabeitia and Martin begin in Argentina, before Martin's first trip to Bilbao, 'to visit old friends' as he said, in 1922? Whatever the case may be, we can be certain that Irish and Basque people settled in same communities throughout the province of Buenos Aires in the nineteenth century, and they evidently took an interest in each other.

The parallels drawn between Basque and Irish nationalists indicate how they saw each other, how they saw themselves, and how observers continue to view the relationship between the two nations. For example, 'Ulster' as a concept could be Navarre, it could be "spread throughout the Basque Country," and it could be the Basque Country itself, depending on the observer. Pádraic Pearse was variously idolized,

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[463] Letter from Ambrose Martin to Leopold Kerney (Feb. 27, 1936), NAI DFA/EMBASSY SERIES 2/24
[464] "Irish-Basque wedding," *Irish Independent* (Jul. 9, 1936).
[465] Sergeant John O'Boyle "Re: Ambrose V. Martin," Garda Síochána report file 68/1/504 (Aug. 20, 1940), copy consulted in NAI DFA/EMBASSY SERIES 2/24; Emphasis mine.

dismissed as a 'demented fool', likened to Sabino Arana,[466] compared to Francisco Franco, and invoked by ETA years later. Ireland and the Basque Country did not present static, objective facts to be understood, but malleable ideas. Many commentators have pointed to the 'Irish mirror' in which Basque nationalists saw themselves reflected. Núñez draws attention to the multi-faceted nature of the Irish example; nationalists of most inclinations could find an analogue in Ireland.[467] Many Irish nationalists of different stripes likewise saw their reflections in Spain. The Republican Congress was naturally drawn to the ambitious, left-wing Spanish Second Republic, while others such as Eoin O'Duffy found a role model in the counter-revolutionary and deeply religious Carlists in Navarre. General O'Duffy perhaps saw too much in common with the Basque nationalists, inspiring his refusal to deploy the Irish Brigade against them.

We see a diversity of Basque-Irish nationalist links in this era, some more clear than others. The early Sinn Féin propagandists in Spain were in touch with the more conservative tendency within Basque nationalism, the CNV, with whom they supplied news for articles in the most widely-read Basque nationalist paper of the day, *Euzkadi*. Eli Gallastegi and his fellow *aberriano* radicals had contact with some Sinn Féin members close to Éamon de Valera himself: Ambrose Martin, Leopold Kerney, and Laurence Ginnell, for example. While de Valera never had a serious interest in formal relations with Basque nationalists, he was sympathetic and had at least a passing interest in their cause.

The good impression made by the visiting group of Basque nationalists in Dublin in 1932 bore fruit in 1936 when George Gilmore was sent to Bilbao to find Catholic priest Ramón Laborda and bring him back to Ireland. Unfortunately for Laborda, the plight of Basque nationalists was unpalatable and not readily comprehensible to the devoutly Catholic Irish public, who associated the Spanish Second Republic and its allies with burnt churches and murdered nuns. Laborda left disappointed and brought back stories that made the rounds in the Basque nationalist press, shocking those who expected the sympathy of a nation supposedly so similar.

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[466] "Basque nationalism," *Irish Press* (Jun. 24, 1932).
[467] Núñez Seixas, "Ecos de pascua, mitos rebeldes," 450-451.

One of the fundamental questions that has inspired many analyses of the Basque-Irish relationship concerns the reverberations of the Irish example in Basque nationalism. What were the lessons that Basque nationalists derived from events in Ireland? And how did these affect the trajectory of their movement? While Sabino Arana did espouse sacrificial death for the homeland,[468] the dramatic Easter Rising provided a more potent example, as did the idealism of the uncompromising anti-Treaty republicans. Irish republicanism's well-developed politics of martyrdom strengthened the convictions of radical Basque nationalists. The Rising demonstrated to Basque nationalists the importance of spiritual victory. Against all odds, and even in loss, they could ultimately win. Yet as Gallastegi saw, factionalism within a nationalist movement could culminate in civil war. With this prophecy on the minds of Gallastegi and his followers, their mild autonomist rivals were not merely political opponents but their future oppressors and murderers. We cannot be certain of the impact of Gallastegi's writings, though *Jagi-Jagi*, in which he contributed frequently, had an impressive weekly circulation of at least 22,000.[469] According to *Jagi-Jagi*, his book *Por la libertad vasca* was an unprecedented success in all of Basque literature, and the publisher was barely able to meet demand.[470] Certainly, thousands if not tens of thousands of Basque nationalists were reading his laudatory accounts of events in Ireland and the explicit Irish parallels he drew with the Basque cause.

Ireland was, above all, a success in the eyes of Basque nationalists in this era. While falling short of an all-Ireland republic, Irish nationalists had achieved far more than their Basque counterparts did, who only received a two-province autonomy statute in a desperate offer from a government which would effectively cease to exist within three years. Nonetheless, Ireland was not their only point of reference. In time, Ireland became the most prominent role model, but Basque nationalists still discussed nationalist movements in Poland, India, Cuba, Ethiopia, Austria, and other nations. However, the teachings of the Irish Revolution naturally appealed more to radicals. While progressive Basque nationalists found justification in the legalist Catalan example to participate in the

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[468] Sabino Arana, "Martires de la Patria," *Baserritarra* no. 4 (1897) in Sabino Arana, *Obras escogidas. Antología política* (San Sebastián: L. Haranburu, 1978), 121.
[469] Lorenzo Espinosa, *Gudari*, 160.
[470] "Por la Libertad Vasca, de Gudari," *Jagi-Jagi* no. 60 (Jan. 6, 1934).

Spanish political process, their radical counterparts found justification in revolutionary Ireland to abstain. Given the manifest success of the Irish model, its appeal is easy to understand.

However, the radical Basque nationalists were markedly different in their hesitance to use violence, or at least to officially endorse it. While “the physical force ethic” was one of the major ideological features of Irish republicanism,[471] it was not openly received in the Basque Country. Nonetheless, it was part and parcel of the means by which radical Basque nationalists hoped to attain independence. When the followers of *Jagi-Jagi* saw an opportunity for a rising of their own in the Spanish Civil War, they tried in vain to convince their countrymen to turn the conflict into a war of national liberation.[472] But in the Basque Country, constitutional nationalism proved to be more durable than it had been in revolutionary Ireland.

[471] English, *Radicals and the Republic*, 45.
[472] Renobales, *Jagi-Jagi*, 115.

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