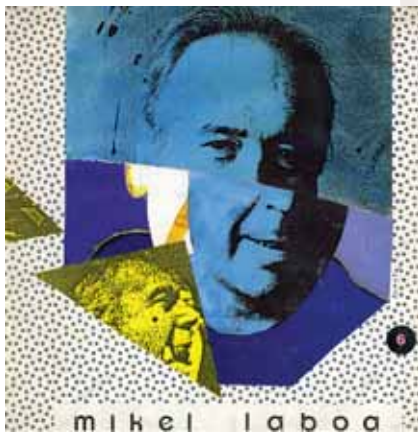


Gerra zibilaren ostean euskara debekatzearen eta jarraitzearen ondorioz, “Kristau ikasbidea” bihurtu zen neska-mutilentzako euskarazko liburu bakarra. Geroago etorri ziren argitalpenak; lehenengoak atzerrian editatutakoak. Era berean, gerora etorri ziren helduak eta larriak alfabetizatze ahaleginak, literaturako nahiz musikako lehenengo urratsak idazle, musikari eta abeslari gazteekin.



## Euskara looks back on thirty years of history

MIKEL ATXAGA

One of the repercussions of the Spanish Civil War was to ban and persecute Euskara, making “Kristau ikasbidea” the only children’s book available in Basque. In time new books and magazines appeared, the first of which were published abroad. Then came efforts to teach children and adults to read and write Euskara, followed by the first forays in literature and music by young writers, musicians and singers.

After the Civil War the panorama for Euskara was one of prohibition and harassment, and the *euskaltzales*, champions of Basque heritage, had either been killed, imprisoned, silenced or had fled the country. However, at church the priests began again to deliver their sermons and teach catechism in Euskara. For the boys and girls of the post war period “Kristau-ikasbidea” (the catechism) was the only book they were allowed to read in Euskara. All of the other books were burnt, hidden or banned.

The first publications were printed abroad: “Urrundik, bake oroi” (1945) and “Gudarien egiñak” (1946) by Telesforo

de Monzón; “Joañixio” and “Bizia garratza” (Irazusta, 1946 and 1950); “Urte guziko meza eta bezperak” (Orixe, 1950); and “Sopokel-en antzerkiak” (Zaitegi, 1946); the magazine series, “Euzko Gogoa” (1950-56, Zaitegi, Orixe, Andima). and other publications such as “Anaiak,” “Itxartu,” “Euzkadi,” “Argia,” “Euzko Deia,” “Alderdi,” “Galezca,” and “Ekin.”

Before the 1950s nothing was published in Euskara in Hego Euskal Herria. The first publication was “Egan,” sponsored by the “Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País” and the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa (1948), followed by “Jakín,” put out by the Franciscan monks at Arantzazu (1956), and “Zeruko Argia” by the Capuchin monks (1960). The first books to be published were “Arantzazuko Poema” (1949) and “Ama-semeak” (1951) by Salvatore Mitxelena; “Euskaldunak” (Orixe, 1950); “Alosko Torrea” (1950) and “Joanak, joan” (1955) by Jon Etxaide; “Noni eta Mani”, (P. Muxika, 1952); “Euskal Mila Olerki Eder” (X. Onaindia, 1954); “Hamabost egun Urgain'en”, (J. A. Loidi, 1955); “San

Agustinen Aitorkizunak" (Orixe, 1956); "Leturiaren egunkari ezkutua" (Txillardegi, 1957). Many of these books were published by the publishing house Itxaropena.

The only way to learn to read was by actually reading, and those who dared to write did so by submitting articles for publication in magazines and journals. Very few people managed to become fluent in Euskara with such limited resources. Grammars or books that had been written before the Civil War were driven underground.

### The impetus takes hold

To promote Euskara and Basque literature, Vice Lehendakari Joseba Rezola created "Sabindiar Batzain" in Donibane Lohizune (Saint Jean Luz) in 1950; the *hizketaldiak* emerged in 1953 and in 1956 EKA (Euskal Kulturaren Alde) with participation by Manu Sota, José Miguel Barandiaran, Manuel Irujo, José Antonio Aguirre, Telesforo Monzón and Ibiñagabeitia, among others.

In 1942, Elvira Zipitria started up the first underground *ikastola*; in 1956 *gau-eskolak* (night schools) were started in Donostia to teach Euskara to adults, and a year later the Benedictine monks followed suit in Lazkao. In 1953 María Dolores Agirre returned to Iztunde Ikastola to teach Euskara to adults and to promote Basque-language theater arts. Around the same time, the radio station "La voz de Guipúzcoa" (the voice of Gipuzkoa) began broadcasting a few programs in Euskara. Other radio stations sprung up, such as Segura (1956), Arrate (1959) and Loiola (1961).

Xabier Peña teaching classes in Bilbao (1949), and would later publish "Euskal irakasbide laburra"; EIA (Euskal Ikasle Alkartasuna) was created by Luis Mari Retolaza, Josu Arenaza, Alfonso Irigoien, and in 1970 X. Peña published "Iniciación del estudio del euskera".

At the same time important gatherings were being organized: Eusko Ikaskuntza Basque Studies Society) in Baiona, (1954); Euskaltzaindia in Arantzazu (1956), and in Paris 400 people showed up in 1956 at the First World Basque Congress.

Those were also the years of the first bertsolari championships. The first one was held in Tolosa (1945), and others, sponsored by Euskaltzaindia, followed in 1958 in Iparralde, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa; in 1960 the first Euskal Herriko Txapelketa Nagusia (Bertsolari Championship of Euskal Herria) was staged.

Newspapers in Euskara appeared at newsstands under such titles as "Anaitasuna" and "Agur" in Bizkaia, "Goiz-Argi" and "Zeruko Argia" in Gipuzkoa, "Herria" in Iparralde and "Príncipe de Viana" in Navarra. These were the "schools" for learning to read and write in Euskara, and where such writers as Ricardo Arregi, Ramón Saizarbitoria, Arantxa

Urretabizkaia, Amaia Lasa, Lurdes Iriondo, Xabier Lete, Andu Lertxundi and Bernardo Atxaga got their start.

While the phenomenon of *ikastolas* spread outward from San Sebastián to other Basque capitals and towns, musicians like Lurdes Iriondo, Benito Lertxundi, Xabier Lete, Antton Valverde, and the groups Ez dok Amairu, Oskarbi and Oskorri used their voices and music to promote the cause of Euskara.

### Children, teens and adults

To help children learn to read and write "Umeen deia" was founded in Navarra by the Franciscan monk Torres Ibañez, Aita Felipe Murieta, in 1959, and published until his death in 1966. In Gipuzkoa the magazine "Zeruko Argia" included a comic strip called "Pin-Pin" from 1960-64. José Antonio Retolaza created "Kili-Kili" in Bizkaia, a magazine read by youngsters throughout Euskal Herria and still published today. It came out in mimeograph form from 1966-68 and in print in 1977. The publishers of "Kili-Kili" organized an annual *jaialdi*, a hugely successful event that drew in up to 9,000 children.

The ideas kept coming and eventually *gau-eskolak* were set up so that young people who left school at an early age could learn something more than just Spanish and math, especially young men before they entered military service. The same name was later used in 1966 for adult reading and writing classes set up in different locations, but now under the supervision of Euskaltzaindia, on a proposal from Ricardo Arregi. The first exercises involved reading assorted texts and studying a limited amount of grammar to reinforce writing skills. When the first grammar books became available they were then included as class materials: "Euskara ire laguna", (Patxi Altuna, 1967); "Euskara Irati bidez" (Jon Oñatibia, 1965), and in standard or unified Basque (*Euskara batua*), "Oinarrizko euskara" by Imanol Berriatua (1968), based on the methods used in Hebrew schools.

Ricardo Arregi died in a tragic car accident in 1969 at the age of 27. By then the *gau-eskolak* were well-rooted and soon began being known throughout Euskal Herria as *euskaltegiak* under the sponsorship of Euskaltzaindia. Many of these schools opted to use the methods developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who believed that teaching people to read and write raised their social and political awareness. To coordinate all of the Basque language schools an umbrella group called AEK (Alfabetatze-Euskalduntze Koordinakundea) was founded in 1977, dominated primarily by the so-called "abertzale left."

In 1981 the Basque Government created HABE (Helduen Alfabetatze-Berreuskaldutze Erakundea), the Institute for Basque Culture, Language and Adult Literacy.