



# Basque Writing 5

## GERNIKA 75 years



2012 is a special year for us in the Basque Country. Our hope for peace is stronger than ever. But it is also a very significant year of remembrance. We mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the most appalling tragedy ever to befall our country. Its most well-known and most international symbol is Gernika, no doubt thanks to Pablo Picasso's painting. The town was bombed on 26 April, 1937, by the Condor Legion that was helping Franco, and Picasso turned it into a symbol against atrocities. Gernika is our sacred town, the symbol of the freedoms of the Basque people. And the town of peace. The Basque PEN has produced an anthology of poems to remember it and has received contributions from all over the world.

Gernika happened 75 years ago. And so did many other things: the first newspaper we had ever had in our history survived a few months before disappearing when the fascists overran the Basque Country and destroyed our autonomy. Our greatest poet at that time was arrested and shot by firing squad while working as a journalist in Gernika. He is the first martyr to freedom of expression in the Basque Country. Thousands of other writers and citizens were forced into exile. In this special issue we want to mark that 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our small language, our minority culture, had made great strides forward during the decades at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticism, as in many other places in Europe, led to Basque nationalism and the awareness of our language. The language was renewed, teaching in Basque came into being, the *Ikastolas* or Basque-medium schools were

set up, the Academy for the Basque Language was founded, the level of literature was raised and it spread and adopted the modern European trends, journalism took strong strides forward. Within a few years, the nation with a strong oral tradition but with its written forms almost entirely restricted to the Church, set out down the well-trodden path to carve out a place for itself in cultural life on the same level as other small nations.

And when the most stable point on that path had been reached, when the most difficult part had been achieved and when all that remained was for it to be consolidated, we lost everything. We were taken captive by a one of the most deadly and darkest dictatorships, aided and abetted by crime and denial. It took decades in the catacombs, in exile, in clandestinity to move forward. In 1950, the Basque PEN was the fruit of all that. Because we need to know where we come from if we want to know where we are. To know what we had, and what was taken away from us.



*Urtzi Urrutikoetxea*  
*President of the Basque PEN Centre*



# The Basque Culture's Flowering



## Lutxo Egia

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a crucial

issue led to great concern and preoccupation among the Basque Country's writers and Basque language loyalists: the unification of the language.

Basque was made up of dialects, but unfortunately there was no unified or standard language.

Against the backdrop of Romanticism at that time, Basque and Basque culture were in the midst of a period of flowering.

Yet, without a unified language or spelling rules, the magazines, education or literature that had begun to emerge would have difficulty functioning.

The concern had been raised at an earlier moment. Back in 1848, the writer Agosti Xaho published the first newspaper in Basque *Uskal-Herriko Gasetta* in Bayonne. He wrote about this problem in its first editorial: "When starting this newspaper, it was no small obstacle as to which Basque (Uskara, Eskara, Euskara or Heskua\*) of which province we should choose to write in. It would be better for us if there were just one Basque, as that way we could be better understood."

As the years went by, the concern simply deepened. By the time the first regular magazines (*Eskualduna*, *Zeruko Argia*) appeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, writers were very worried about the language and its spelling rules. And not just in journalism, but also in literature. Writers who were working in the North and South of the Basque Country [under French and Spanish jurisdiction, respectively], like Oxolo, Ki-

rikiño, and others, were calling for special treatment of the language.

That was why many Basque language loyalists from the whole of the Basque Country got together in Hendaye in 1901 and in Hondarribia in 1902. Unfortunately, the meetings became bogged down in differences of opinion and arguments, and the matter concerning how the language should be written was abandoned.

In the absence of any unification, each writer stuck to his or her own dialect and spelling. Naturally, that had a negative effect on Basque literature.

Yet the association *Eskualzaleen Biltzarra* was created out of those early meetings. It was followed by other associations and they all played a decisive role in promoting the Basque language and culture.

In 1918, in Oñati (Gipuzkoa), *Eusko Ikaskuntza* (The Basque Studies Society) was set up with the aim of continuing the work done by the researchers. This society promoted all kinds of research, organised congresses, opened up offices abroad as well as producing publications, including the RIEV, the International Journal of Basque Studies, founded a few years previously by Julio Urkijo and which had gained a reputation worldwide.

A year later, the *Euskaltzaindia*, the Academy of the Basque Language, was founded. As its main task was to watch over the language, it soon got down to proposing that it should work on the normalisation and standardisation of the corpus. But unfortunately it was not possible at that moment to do anything to unify the Basque language.

Around the same time, many Basque language loyalists set up another association in 1926 to encourage and

spread Basque and Basque culture among the people: *Euskaltzaleak*.

Under the guidance of the writer Jose Maria Agirre aka *Lizardi* and the priest Jose Ariztimuño aka *Aitzol*, the *Euskaltzaleak* association became totally immersed in the activities in support of Basque. Aitzol, committed to exerting an influence on society and spreading Basque language loyalty everywhere, became the group's main driving force.

So he promoted many activities and made use of different platforms: poetry competitions, matches between Basque verse makers, days devoted to drama, the *Yakintza* magazine, *El Dia* newspaper, etc.

But the main feature of the first three decades or so of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was undoubtedly the golden age of literature, particularly that of lyrical poetry.

Aitzol wanted to turn poetry into the symbolic representative of Basque identity. However, the Basque Renaissance writers (*Lizardi*, *Lauaxeta*, *Tene Mujika*, *Orixe*, *Julene Azpeitia*, *Loramendi*, etc.) made a deep impression as far as literature was concerned. They clearly showed that poetry was something more than a mere tool for awakening society.

Poets broke with the previous poetry tradition in terms of its forms and subjects, and as a result, lyric poetry experienced the most fruitful period it had ever known.

And that is how it would have continued if the Spanish Civil War [1936-1939], the war begun and forced by the Spanish military, had not interrupted that progress and utterly destroyed it.

Estepan Urkiaga aka *Lauaxeta* had written in his poem entitled *Mendigoxaliarena* "You have to give everything for freedom so dear," ("*dana emon biar yako matte dan azkatasunari*") and it was in defence of freedom that he was executed by firing squad in 1937. And so were many others together with him, including Aitzol himself. Many were forced into exile; while those who remained in the country were condemned to live in noisy silence.



## Lauaxeta, the murdered poet



**Esteban Urkiaga, Lauaxeta** (Laukiz, 1905 - Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1937) was a poet and journalist. His family moved to the farmhouse Lauaxeta in nearby Mungia when he was a child. He studied in Durango, Azpeitia and Oña in Burgos. At Loiola-Azpeitia he combined his study of classics amid much enthusiasm for Basque language and culture. There he met, among other supporters of the Basque language, **Andima Ibiñagabeitia** and **Jokin Zaitegi**, two of

the few boosters of the Basque literature in the after-war period in exile and **founders of Basque PEN**.

It was there where Lauaxeta his first works. His early religious vocation led him to become a novice, but he left the church to devote himself to journalism and literature. He joined the Basque Nationalist Party, where he took charge of several publications in Euskera. He was the head of the Basque-language page in the newspaper Euzkadi, while becoming one of the two most significant poets of the Basque Pizkundea (Renaissance) in the 30s, with Xabier Lizardi. Lauaxeta writes a daily political column in Euzkadi, he writes three plays and boosts education in Basque language and culture, before he is 30. Bide barriak (New Ways), his first poem book is published in 1931.

As the name suggests, it brought a new aesthetics. Lauaxeta wanted to bring the European modernism to the Basque literature. He was a fine orator, and went from village to village taking part in rallies and festivals. He worked on complicated symbolist poetry, of which the major feature was the influence of modernism. His favourite topics were impossible love and the bitter aftermath, young people and youth, fatherland and freedom, the fleetingness of life, and social poetry. In 1935 he publishes his second book Arrats beran (At dusk), where he tries to mix the traditional and modern influences, while introducing new topics as the social poetry or the eroticism. In 1936 he met Federico Garcia Lorca, whom he admired and had translated into Basque. A few months later both poets would be killed.

When the Spanish putschists start the war, Lauaxeta joins the Basque army to become a 'gudari' (Basque soldier). He was the head of some publications and propaganda, and Service Corps Commander in the Basque army. After the infamous bombing of the Basque holy town Gernika on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1937, Lauaxeta travelled there with French war correspondents of *La Petite Gironde*, to prove Nazis supporting Franco had burnt the city. While there he was arrested and taken to on the Convent of

the Carmelites in Gasteiz, converted into a prison. Esteban Urkiaga was judicially tried, and probably the only one prosecuted. Lauaxeta based his defense upon his acts of saving the lives of priests and right-wingers. Condemned to die, the death sentence was carried out against the wall of Gasteiz's old seminary, despite the efforts of the Basque Government to exchange him for a Spanish Nationalist prisoner. By his side until the very last moment was the priest that he met in Oña, Father Moreno, who left written testimony of the poet's last moments. On June 24, 1937 he wrote in his diary that that night he had gone "to the prison. To help Esteban Urkiaga".

The next day he wrote a shuddering note: "Esteban Urkiaga's execution leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Serene and Christian, entirely immersed in the gently sweetness of our sacred faith. He had felt it and been consoled by the New Testament, the daily chewing over of the long, resonating hours in the prison, grey hours, without reason... eternal. Jesus is life! Jesus, the only one! He who was resurrected. Later, at half past five, the customary scene: speaking with my crucifix tenderly infatuated with the moment... Get out the encephalic masses! I take off my medals; gather up the Christ and the rosary with those who have died. . .".

Father Moreno's words reflect that until the very last moment, Lauaxeta maintained the attitude expressed in the poem written little before he was executed, "Azken Oyua" ("The Last Shout"): *Goiñ eder honetan erail bear nabe / txindor baten txintak gozaten naukela? / El nanten leñera begiok intz-gabe!*

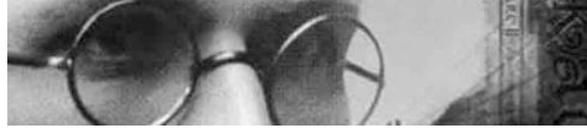
It's one of the most beautiful poems written in Basque that have ever been put to music. The artist who did so was Antxon Valverde, who in a beautiful disc gave such a dramatic force that thankfully a whole new generation has recuperated the Biscayan's poetry. Criticized are being difficult in the past, his poetry is now reaching beyond its earlier limits.

Today the best homage that one can give to the poet is to read his poetry. With fault in the translation, Valverde's album can be a good, viable approximation. Likewise, works in Spanish regarding the poet are noted.

All is to better know an executed poet who in appearances was not lucky enough to be fully considered Spanish. On the contrary, there could lay another García Lorca, the poet who Lauaxeta came to know in Bilbao and of whom he translated various poems. But it is not that important. What is important is that one continues to investigate the life and work of the commander, executed that June 25th, the mobilized poet Esteban Urkiaga Lauaxeta; and to know, for instance, the report of his trial or to recuperate part of his library, lost in a war in which no one was innocent. As they say, without a doubt, the guilty were let loose. As it was recently declared in the novel "Agur Euzkadi?" ("Goodbye, Basque Country!") by Juan Luis Zabala, wherein Lauaxeta comes back from the grave fifty years after his execution, the death of Esteban Urkiaga Basaraz symbolizes the cut, the dramatic stunting of a cultural rebirth whose fruits have deprived us of all of past Basque generations.



# Lauaxeta's poems



## THE LAST CRY

*To Zubillaga'tar Karla  
In prison in Vitoria-Gasteiz*

They are going to kill me, this beautiful morning  
While I am delighted by a robin's tweets ?  
Let's reach the window my eyes without dew

Through Gorbea comes to me a terrible cannon thunder  
The planes's wings fly as cloud thieves  
I see black war angels in blood,  
In front of their feet many Basque soldiers,  
Young clever guys, keep the motherland  
The world has nothing as good as her

But, mighty Lord, do you want to take me out now?  
You keep me tied as a lamb  
When my homeland most needs me?  
I can hear her cry in a heavy gun sound

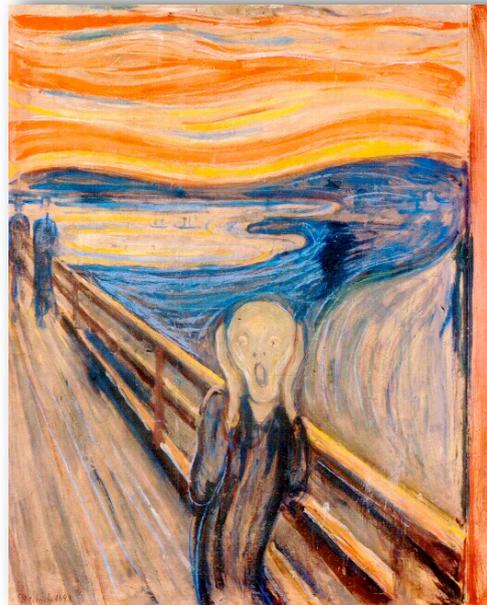
In the bright shine of the weapons  
May Death come on the high mountains  
Upon them the last breaths are beauty  
May the thick holm oak be my shelter  
The deathly wound of my thin arrow  
To riddle the words of the enemy

With the sons united out of love of justice  
May my life source pour  
May the land be covered of blood roses  
Sweet and beautiful on men's foreheads  
Death-kisses dedicated to the homeland  
The wounded stand up, up in the mountains  
The glory opens her clear hands  
So that I fall on her

And in the last hour  
May it caress me when the breath shortens  
Horses running for the victory branches  
And in the glassy fog of these eyes  
May pass firmly the heroes' lights;  
May these pale hands reach out weakly  
So that they can hold you, holy Basque flag.  
May the freedom breath wrap you forever  
Bend down there, oh my head,  
Between the sweet arms of our motherland!  
And dear brother, keep fighting  
To the immortal Basques' mother  
May this hope arise in my mind.

Lord, give me please this Death;  
Leave the smell of the roses for the coward  
Send me the holy freedom  
I want to vanish the foreigners' insult  
So that this body rests in peace  
Until the big day for the free peoples!  
May I fall in the war for justice  
Not turning my back to the wall, in the clear beautiful morning  
And when the holy peace is born  
Join my simple bones with the others'  
Help with the highest morning hymn  
To the single grave.

But, please, end  
The memory's love shadow  
Christ's cross; on him I wait.  
I have nothing but Jesus' faith  
May the best sincere people take care  
The breath of those of us who died, the power of those of us  
who were killed.



*Selection: Hasier Rekondo  
Translation: Utzi Urrutikoetxea*



## Lauaxeta's poem



### FAREWELL, EUZKADI\*!

*In prison in Vitoria-Gasteiz*

Farewell Euskadi, the Lord is taking me away  
to the beautiful, bright homeland.  
I shed tears  
as I gazed at your mountains.

It had a son, but the enemy  
tore out its heart;  
one cold May morning  
shrouded its beautiful body.

It left the world its lips pressed against  
the holy cross,  
the peace of Christ had filled  
its mouth from a young age.

Out of his love for God, and for the homeland  
he was not afraid,  
and from the bottom of his heart  
he wished you abundant happiness.

Dear Euskadi, remain always  
in the utmost faith in Christ;  
so that if you can't find happiness here  
you can find it in Heaven.

I am facing holy death,  
so have faith, dear Basque men and women:  
keep the law of Jesus  
so that Euskadi may be free.

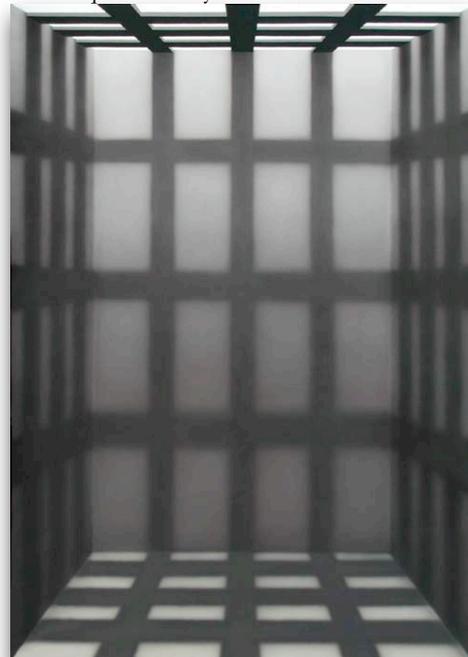
I found the Basque country's corners beautiful,  
and beautiful its wide, open sea;

but now I find the shadow of death  
even more beautiful!

I am young in this life  
and I lacked nothing.  
Oh, Lord! How hard it is  
to have to depart this world!

Let not my will be done,  
but rather let yours be done.  
To light-filled Heaven, my soul,  
and to the dark earth, my body.

\*The Basque Country



*Translation: Sarah J. Turtle*



# EGUNA newspaper, 75 years on

## Urtzi Urrutikoetxea

*"The life of our Nation, our identity, our joy in our beliefs and aims are calling us and binding us through an obligation: Basques, stand firm!"* This was one of the headlines in the *Eguna* newspaper on 13 June 1937. It was the paper's last issue. Six months earlier, on New Year's Day, the first editorial entitled "Emen gara" (Here we are) was published. *"We come brimming with happiness and our eyes fill with tears for we are unable to grasp that joy. We cannot believe it. We have all of a sudden received the firm order to turn into truth and reality what was believed to be a mad impossible dream cherished by all Basque loyalists and Basque speakers, (...) We are moved by the same dream that moved Etzpare. And those of us who have EGUNA in our hearts, eyes and thoughts, lustily sing the fervent song of that old writer: Basque, go out! Basque, go out into the square! Basque, go out all over the world, on the wings of EGUNA!"*

Ever since *Euzkadi*, the newspaper edited by Engracio Aranzadi, appeared in 1913, there used to be a page exclusively in Basque every single day. Kirikiño, from Mañaria (Bizkaia), was the editor of this section entitled *Egunekua* until his death in 1929. By then, Lizardi was considering a Basque-language newspaper: *"Our newspaper could be strongly Basque loyalist as well as Catholic, in other words, it would always be in favour of the Basque language and the rights of Basque speakers, despite not being linked to any political party."*

The renaissance was in full swing, the *ikastolas* (Basque-medium schools), the *Euskaltzaindia* (Academy of the Basque Language), the *Zeruko Argia* weekly magazine had been created, and the literature wanted to look to the European avant-garde. But the daily newspaper's plan was shelved by the war: the war economy reduced the newspaper's pages to four. *Euzkadi* ended up virtually without any space for a Basque section. The PNV-Basque Nationalist Party decided to publish a Basque-language newspaper at its very headquarters in Posta street in Bilbao (that venerated location of Basque journalists deserves a memorial plaque in the Zazpikaleak or Old Quarter in Bilbao). When the Spanish Civil War [1936-1939] broke out, Estepan Urkiaga aka *Lauaxeta* entrusted the Basque page of *Euzkadi* to Manu Ziarsolo aka *Abeletxe*, and *Abeletxe* himself became *Eguna*'s chief editor. This is Iñigo Aranbarri's take on the situation: *"Eguna was an emergency newspaper, a tool for encouraging the Gudaris or Basque soldiers. To obtain information, the teletype texts that reached Euzkadi were translated, and the issue was filled as best they could with news sent from the towns and the official war dispatches. Ten thousand were printed every day. Then more were distributed at the front and among the Basque soldiers, always free for them and on sale for fifteen cents from the newspaper stands."*

That was on

June 13. By then, nearly everything had happened: the executions in Navarre, the conquest of Gipuzkoa, the execution of Aitzol, and the air raids on Otxandio, Bilbao, Elgeta, Durango, Gernika, leaving a trail of death. Bilbao was only just managing to resist the attack. The following day, 14 June, *Eguna* was not published, and it was not until 6 December 1990, 53 years, six months and twenty-three days later, that we Basques once again had a newspaper exclusively in Basque, *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*.

Bilbao fell on 19 June. Lauaxeta was still alive, but behind bars in Vitoria-Gasteiz. He was shot by firing squad on 25 June. The figure of the poet has reached us, not so much as the journalist in favour of a free press, but the journalist who gave his life to spread worldwide what had taken place in Gernika. On 30 June the Basque President Agirre wrote the Turtzioz-Trucios declaration on going into exile. Fascism was the victor ready to stifle the Basque language and the free press. Paradoxically, all the *Eguna* issues can be accessed via the *armiarma.com* website, but the rich legacy of *Euskaldunon Egunkaria* [closed down by the Spanish Judicial Authorities in February 2003] remains outside the Internet.

This is what Agirre said in his declaration: "Is it such a serious matter that a people should defend its freedom? For defending it, for being worthy of the nation, a hundred thousand Basque citizens are in a dreadful situation. I prefer not to think that sensitivity has disappeared from this world." Prompted by this sensitivity, a group of writers set up the PEN Club at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, so that war would not break out again and so that the word would predominate among people of differing views. In 1950, exiled Basques set up the first Basque PEN Club to support the ideas of free expression and peace. It did not last long. But thanks to the campaign waged worldwide by the PEN clubs in Catalonia

and London, the current Basque PEN Club came into being in 2004 in the wake of the closing down of the Basque-language newspaper *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*. We have been going for eight years, spreading Basque, literature and freedom of expression all over the world, so that the darkness suffered by our language and people may not be repeated anywhere. We constantly remember those valiant Basque loyalists who shone light on the Basque language from *Eguna* in the most difficult of moments.



On behalf of the Basque PEN Club



# George Steer, journalist and witness

## THE TIMES

News Report by George Steer for the The Times about Guernica 1937

### THE TRAGEDY OF GUERNICA TOWN DESTROYED IN AIR ATTACK EYE-WITNESS'S ACCOUNT

*From Our Special Correspondent*

**BILBAO, April 27 1937**

Guernica, the most ancient town of the Basques and the centre of their cultural tradition, was completely destroyed yesterday afternoon by insurgent air raiders. The bombardment of this open town far behind the lines occupied precisely three hours and a quarter, during which a powerful fleet of aeroplanes consisting of three German types, Junkers and Heinkel bombers and Heinkel fighters, did not cease unloading on the town bombs weighing from 1,000lb. downwards and, it is calculated, more than 3,000 two-pounder aluminium incendiary projectiles. The fighters, meanwhile, plunged low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilian population who had taken refuge in the fields.

The whole of Guernica was soon in flames except the historic Casa de Jontas with its rich archives of the Basque race, where the ancient Basque Parliament used to sit. The famous oak of Guernica, the dried old stump of 600 years and the young new shoots of this century, was also untouched. Here the kings of Spain used to take the oath to respect the democratic rights (fueros) of Vizcaya and in return received a promise of allegiance as suzerains with the democratic title of Señor, not Rey Vizcaya. The noble parish, church of Santa Maria was also undamaged except for the beautiful chapter house, which was struck by an incendiary bomb.

At 2 am today when I visited the town the whole of it was a horrible sight,

flaming from end to end. The reflection of the flames could be seen in the clouds of smoke above the mountains from 10 miles away. Throughout the night houses were falling until the streets became long heaps of red impenetrable debris.

Many of the civilian survivors took the long trek from Guernica to Bilbao in antique solid-wheeled Basque farmcarts drawn by oxen. Carts piled high with such household possessions as could be saved from the conflagration clogged the roads all night. Other survivors were evacuated in Government lorries, but many were forced to remain round the burning town lying on mattresses or looking for lost relatives and children, while units of the fire brigades and the Basque motorized police under the personal direction of the Minister of the Interior, Señor Monzon, and his wife continued rescue work till dawn.

#### CHURCH BELL ALARM

In the form of its execution and the scale of the destruction it wrought, no less than in the selection of its objective, the raid on Guernica is unparalleled in military history. Guernica was not a military objective. A factory producing war material lay outside the town and was untouched. So were two barracks some distance from the town. The town lay far behind the lines. The object of the bombardment was seemingly the demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race. Every fact bears out this appreciation, beginning with the day when the deed was done.

Monday was the customary market day in Guernica for the country round. At 4.30 pm, when the market was full and peasants were still coming in, the church bell rang the alarm for approaching aeroplanes,

*This article by George Steer of The Times brought to the world news of the massacre by German pilots of more than 1,000 civilians in the Basque town. The outrage inspired Pablo Picasso's masterwork, and Steer has now been honoured for the piece.*

**Politics: Lies, manipulation and the crucial importance of a free press and truthful accounts of historical events**

Guernica exemplifies how the media reported then about the event to counter the propaganda of Franco who tried to put the blame for the destruction of Guernica on the shoulders of the Left in Spain. Had it not been for the eye witness of a journalist from the New York Times, the true story would have never come out and a skeptical world population of the Left would have easily believed Franco's claim.

Something similar happened in Germany when Hitler put on fire the Reichstagsgebäude and then blamed the Left to justify a full scale political crackdown of all opposition.



and the population sought refuge in cellars and in the dugouts prepared following the bombing of the civilian population of Durango on March 31, which opened General Mola's offensive in the north. The people are said to have shown a good spirit. A Catholic priest took charge and perfect order was maintained.

Five minutes later a single German bomber appeared, circled over the town at a low altitude, and then dropped six heavy bombs, apparently aiming for the station. The bombs with a shower of grenades fell on a former institute and on houses and streets surrounding it. The aeroplane then went away. In another five minutes came a second bomber, which threw the same number of bombs into the middle of the town. About a quarter of an hour later three Junkers arrived to continue the work of demolition, and thenceforward the bombing grew in intensity and was continuous, ceasing only with the approach of dusk at 7.45. The whole town of 7,000 inhabitants, plus 3,000 refugees, was slowly and systematically pounded to pieces. Over a radius of five miles round a detail of the raiders' technique was to bomb separate *caseríos*, or farmhouses. In the night these burned like little candles in the hills. All the villages around were bombed with the same intensity as the town itself, and at Mugica, a little group of houses at the head of the Guernica inlet, the population was machine-gunned for 15 minutes.

### RHYTHM OF DEATH

It is impossible to state yet the number of victims. In the Bilbao Press this morning they were reported as "fortunately small," but it is feared that this was an understatement in order not to alarm the large refugee population of Bilbao. In the hospital of Josefinas, which was one of the first places bombed, all the 42 wounded militiamen it sheltered were killed outright. In a street leading downhill from the Casa de Juntas I saw a place where 50 people, nearly all women and children, are said to have been trapped in an air raid refuge under a mass of burning wreckage. Many were killed in the fields, and altogether the deaths may run into hundreds. An elderly priest named Aronategui was killed by a bomb while rescuing children from a burning house.

The tactics of the bombers, which may be of interest to students of the new military science, were as follows: — First, small parties of aeroplanes threw heavy bombs and hand grenades all over the town, choosing area after area in orderly fashion. Next came fighting machines which swooped low to machine-gun those who ran in panic from dugouts, some of which had already been penetrated by 1,000lb bombs, which make a hole 25ft.

deep. Many of these people were killed as they ran. A large herd of sheep being brought in to the market was also wiped out. The object of this move was apparently to drive the population under ground again, for next as many as 12 bombers appeared at a time dropping heavy and incendiary bombs upon the ruins. The rhythm of this bombing of an open town was, therefore, a logical one: first, hand grenades and heavy bombs to stampede the population, then machine-gunning to drive them below, next heavy and incendiary bombs to wreck the houses and burn them on top of their victims.

The only counter-measures the Basques could employ, for they do not possess sufficient aeroplanes to face the insurgent fleet, were those provided by the heroism of the Basque clergy. These blessed and prayed for the kneeling crowds—Socialists, Anarchists, and Communists, as well as the declared faithful—in the crumbling dugouts.

When I entered Guernica after midnight houses were crashing on either side, and it was utterly impossible even for firemen to enter the centre of the town. The hospitals of Josefinas and Convento de Santa Clara were glowing heaps of embers, all the churches except that of Santa Maria were destroyed, and the few houses which still stood were doomed. When I revisited Guernica this afternoon most of the town was still burning and new fires had broken out. About 30 dead were laid out in a ruined hospital.

### A CALL TO BASQUES

The effect here of the bombardment of Guernica, the Basques' holy city, has been profound and has led President Aguirre to issue the following statement in this morning's Basque Press: *"The German airmen in the service of the Spanish rebels, have bombarded Guernica, burning the historic town which is held in such veneration by all Basques. They have sought to wound us in the most sensitive of our patriotic sentiments, once more making it entirely clear what Euzkadi may expect of those who do not hesitate to destroy us down to the very sanctuary which records the centuries of our liberty and our democracy."*

*"Before this outrage all we Basques must react with violence, swearing from the bottom of our hearts to defend the principles of our people with unheard of stubbornness and heroism if the case requires it. We cannot hide the gravity of the moment; but victory can never be won by the invader if, raising our spirits to heights of strength and determination, we steel ourselves to his defeat."*

*"The enemy has advanced in many parts elsewhere to be driven out of them afterwards. I do not hesitate to affirm that here the same thing will happen. May to-day's outrage be one spur more to do it with all speed."*