



# Basque Writing 18

## Literature and Political Conflict

**STRUGGLE  
CHANGES  
EVERYTHING.**

Literature is the daughter of its time, ergo, any kind of political conflict will have an influence in the production of fiction. It has an influence on the way literature is produced, spread and, also, in its themes, as political conflicts are intensely represented in literary works.

Through the articles that have been collected in this magazine, we will see that the political conflicts that have occurred in the Basque Country have had two kinds of consequences in Basque literary production of the last century. The Spanish Civil War “caused the exile of Basque Arts, both symbolically and literally”, as Amaia Serrano states in her article *Basque narrative on the Spanish Civil War*.

On the other hand, Ibon Egaña’s article *Through word conflicts* highlights that, from the 1990s onwards (especially from the 2000s to date), there have been numerous works that have addressed the topic of the political and armed conflict, and that since “ETA decided to cease its armed struggle within the political conflict on Basque nationhood in 2011” “the narrative around the political violence that has been employed for 30 years in the post-Franco era has become a topic of debate”.

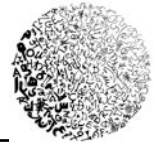
Izaro Arroita has taken an author as reference to write her article *Political conflicts in Ramon Saizarbitoria’s novels*. The canonised that awarded writer “has been groundbreaking, not only for bringing modernity to Basque literature, but also for addressing the account of the Basque conflict and bringing the concern for its memory to the fore”.

In his article called *Literature and political conflict*, Gorka Mercero has brought the novel “Patria”, which was written by Fernando Aramburu and whose main topic is the political conflict, to the pages of this magazine. Mercero explains that the main function of that novel is “is to deny the existing political conflict between the Basque Country and Spain, that is to say, to deny that Spain has a counterpart in the Basque Country” and to win the *battle of the story* through its discourse.

Finally, in an article that he has named *The importance of the consequences*, Aritz Gorrotxategi wants to underline, by mentioning some novels that he has chosen, how deep the wounds are that a conflict leaves in a society and ends up stating that “It is our responsibility to make sure that silence and forgetfulness do not prevail, to make all the facets of our narrations visible, to ensure that the opposition of those things that are wrong is not limited to the area of the kitchen. Humanising the victims and those who died, that will be the challenge of our literature in the future”.



**Laura Mintegi**  
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# Basque Narrative on the Spanish Civil War

## Introduction

It is no news that the Spanish Civil War changed the development of Basque literature in many ways. The bans, censorship and harassment that started in that period had a negative influence on Basque culture in general and caused the exile of Basque Arts, both symbolically and literally. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Civil War has had a strong presence in Basque literature (especially in narrative), as it is typical with traumatic situations, fiction has become a resource to react to a long period of silence, and it has become even stronger as oral witnesses have gradually disappeared.

Since the publication of Txomin Arruti's novel called *Loretxo* (1937) until today, many have been the authors who have shown an interest to tell a fictitious story of the Civil War, each of them from their own literary tradition and aesthetic intention, of course. Thus, they have created costumbrist novels (1937-1957), experimental novels (1979-1984) and realistic novels (1989-1999).

All those novels have been determined by the times they were written and published and just as the Basque literature-system stabilized in that historical-literary journey, the memories of the war itself and the cause of the Basque nationhood have

also evolved. Therefore, the representations of war that can be found in each novel need to be interpreted according to the context of their time.

Numerous novels were published between that first novel about the War and 1999, but it was from 2000 on that that amount notoriously started to grow, partly due to the fact that public debate and forum on memory gained importance in the Spanish state and some important political and judicial decisions were made.



Robert Capa, *Espainiako 1936ko Gerra*

## A variety of memorialist novels

Emilio Silva kazetariak 2000. urtean bere aitoren gorpua aurkitu eta lurpetik ateraz geroztik, 36ko Gerraren memoria plazara zabaltzen hasten da. Ekintza horren erantzun mediatikoak oihartzun handia izan zuen gizartean eta erakunde publikoetan, eta orobat euskal eleberrietan. Garai hartan argia ikusi zuten obren artean daude honako hauek: Juan Luis Zabalaren *Agur, Euzkadi* (2000), Lutxo Egiaren *Paperezko hegazkinak* (2002), Bernardo Atxagaren *Soinujolearen semea* (2003), Jokin Muñozen *Antzararen bidea* (2007), Xabier Montoiaren *Golgota* (2008), Iñaki Irasizabalen *Gu bezalako heroiak* (2009), Uxue Alberdiren *Aulki joko*a (2009) eta Jose Inazio Basterretxearen *Azken tranbiaren itzala* (2011).

Moreover, those novels brought two main novelties: on the one hand, they established parallel-



lisms between the Basque conflict and the War (be it to demonstrate that mirroring those two events does not work or to highlight the historic links between both eras), and, on the other hand, the novels show characters that belong to the third generation that has not experienced War who, motivated by some ethical reason, are trying to cast light on some matter.

Additionally, we must not forget about the contributions that children's and young adults' literature has made to the collection of Basque novels that address the Civil War, for instance, war is narrated from the voice and viewpoint of a child in Joseba Sarrionandia's *Kolosala izango da* (2003), and Miren Agur Meabe, the first female writer who approached the war as topic in her novels, chose young people as recipients when she wrote the novel *Urtebete itsasargian* (2006).

In those literary works, no matter if they are addressed to children, young adults or adults, the main characters feel a strong need to tell their stories and their venting helps us to understand their identity and background in a way that tears down all the prejudices that other characters hold about them. In that way, the authors seek to highlight, through poetic truth, the need for historical truth, believing that knowledge of the past will give us the resources to judge the present. Additionally, for the



narrator-characters, the account becomes a way to relieve their traumas, even though their venting is only received by the readers, since their intimate testimony does not reach the rest of the characters.

Furthermore, it is the first time that we find female narrators, which enables us to learn about the violence they experienced through their own voices, as they draw attention to se-

xual violence, injustice and harassment. Thus, that fact exposed that until then almost all the characters and all the narrators had had a male voice and, therefore, war had been connected to masculinity.

### A renewed post-ETA view

After a complex and rocky historical process, ETA decided to cease its armed struggle within the political conflict on Basque nationhood in 2011. That decision had an influence on society and culture and, even though writers have continued to generate literary narrations on the conflict, there have been a numerous amount of authors that have decided to go back to the War: Josu Penades's *Ileak uretan* (2012), Kirmen Uribe's *Mussche* (2012), Garazi Goia's *Txartel bat (des)herrira* (2013), Garbiñe Ubeda's *Hobe isilik* (2013) eta Luis Garde's *Ehiztariaren isilaldia* (2015).

In those novels published after 2011 we can find a new way to look at war: collective memory loses significance and the story is based on the inner conflicts that war has caused in the characters; issues that have different (social, political, personal...) sources are compared; they draw the attention to collectives that have had little presence in war literature (i.e. war children), etc. It is no coincidence that those changes have come after ETA's decision, nor it is that two contributions out of five have been made by female authors.

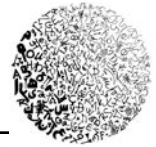
### Last words

The Spanish Civil War has had a considerable presence in Basque novels and many of those have been awarded, have received positive reviews and warm approval from the public. Therefore, it could be stated that literature has helped complete the political and social response to war, as this artistic expression, unlike historiography, has been able to reach the readers and has made them empathise, reflect and come up with new questions.



**Amaia Serrano Mariezkurrena**  
Professor





# THROUGH WORDS CONFLICT

Has Basque literature addressed the issue of the conflict and political violence? It seems impossible to find a way to give a negative response to this question in 2018, unless we come up with a politically intended answer. In effect, since the 1990s and specially from the 2000s until now, there has been an avalanche of works that address the topic of political and armed conflict. Moreover, the research works and critical readings on the topic have also proliferated, which is an indication that debate might have gone beyond the spheres of controversy.

The novels and short stories that talk about the conflict have not only been published, but also recognised, awarded and canonised by literary institutions (Jokin Muñoz, Ramon Saizarbitoria and Harkaitz Cano's work, for example), and the supports of the Basque canonical narrative established in the 1990s have been reinforced; that is to say, the realistic masculine representation of the nation is still the centre of Basque literature and the narrative of the conflict is the most frequent means with which to form that national representation, taking up a space where once prevailed allegory and fantastic imagery.

The proliferation of books about the conflict has, of course, been influenced by the fact that ETA decided to definitively cease its armed activity. It is also undeniable that the new era that was started by that cessation also changed the way literature based on the conflict is received and divulged. Among other things, after the end of armed struggle, the narrative around the political violence that has been employed for 30 years in the post-Franco era has become a topic of debate among political actors and a part of the political contend has moved to the sphere of discourse. Considering that history is a narration has inevitably brought fiction and reality closer.

In line with the tendencies of the last decades in Western culture, in Basque novels about the conflict that have been published from the 2000s on, it also seems that the centre of attention has moved from activists to victims, although there are some exceptions. The main characters of Basque novels are usually people who have suffered from political violence in the broadest of senses. Moreover, the victims that are represented in those novels, are not usually victims of direct violence, but witnesses of those violent acts, such as relatives of victims, people who have somehow been touched by violence. Anjel Lertxundi's *Zorion Perfek-*



Ibon Egaña Etxeberria  
Writer

*tua* and Jokin Muñoz's *Antzararen bidea* are a case in point.

Some authors have focused on victims of state-violence and the parapolic organisations (so did Harkaitz Cano in *Twist*); however, when talking about the suffering that ETA's violence has caused, Basque literature has focused on victims that would sociologically be closer to Basque readers (on ETA members killed by ETA itself, for example) in an effort to show the harm that ETA has caused to Basque society through empathy towards those victims. Nevertheless, other ETA victims that are somehow further away from Basque sociology, are often represented as secondary characters and, usually, their function is to symbolise the guilt of those ETA members that have ended up being victims. In any case, if we read the narrative that has been written in the past few years, it is made clear that a Basque literature that is aimed at consensus in the post-ETA era should necessarily represent both Spanish State's victims and ETA's victims.

The representation of political conflict and violence has taken the form of internal family conflicts in last years' various novels. On the one hand, those novels focus their attention on the private sphere and not the public one in order to show how violence sours and jaundices the intimate and private sphere of family life; but, on the other hand, the fact of narrating the relationships inside the family has a very clear political dimension, since those novels have utilised narration to talk about the intergenerational transmission of the political conflict. More precisely, the political transmission that comes from their fathers and has its origins either in the Civil War, the Franco-era or the 1980s is interrupted in, for instance, **Bernardo Atxaga's** and **Ramon Saizarbitoria's** books, and is all shaped around ETA's violence.



Escaping the traumatic past or the inherited ideological legacy is a desire that is present in various novels and, because of that or perhaps as a consequence of that, many Basque authors have decided to send their character abroad in an attempt to let their traumatic past go. In any case, even though Basque narrative shows escaping the nation and disowning the legacy as a desire, it is also aware that, to an extent, that desire is mere fantasy, and there are, in fact, some stories in which the character cannot escape their father's legacy. Is there a way to leave the patriarchal legacy behind and create new subjects? That is another question that has been posed in some other novels in the last years, mainly in books that have female main characters (In Katixa Agirre's *Atertu arte itxaron* or Uxue Apoalaza's *Mea culpa*, for example).

In recent years, Basque literature has mainly tended to show "our" pain (if that is such a thing). In the literature published in the last few decades, the main characters take the shape of different kinds of victims that are all close to the reader. That narrative is not located at the centre of the conflict and, yet, is determined to divorce itself from its legacy. It wants to escape, but cannot find a way out and ends up perceiving the escape as a mere fantasy.



## Political Conflicts in Ramon Saizabitoria's novels

The way the conflictive political reality of the Basque Country has been represented has been widely discussed by writers and critics. One of the topics of discussion has been if Basque literature's approach of the conflict has been adequate and sufficient. It has been stated that in the first post-Francoist years, Basque literature did not look at the reality of that time close up, that did not have a realistic perspective. The harshness of the political context has been thought to be one of the causes of that fact, as well as the developing process of Basque language and literature. However, starting in the 1990s, the critics see a generalised turn towards realism, a general tendency to write about the historical-political reality of the Basque Country, although eclecticism has always been a main characteristic of Basque literature.

Among the works that talk about what it is known as the 'Basque conflict', Ramon Saizabitoria's *100 metro* (1976) has often been mentioned as the precursor. Saizabitoria's literary work has been characterized by his concern for the conflictive socio-political reality from the very beginning and, from *100 metro* to *Lili eta biok* (2015), the Civil War, Francoism and the Basque conflict are topics that are permanently addressed in his novels. One could say that Saizabitoria has been ground-breaking, not only for bringing modernity to Basque literature, but also for addressing the account of the Basque conflict and bringing the concern for its memory to the

fore. Obviously, his way to represent those conflictive realities in fiction has gradually changed from one novel to another and the aim of this article is to offer you a general reflection on the evolution of his work.

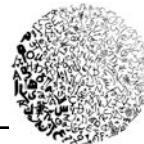
Firstly, it must be taken into consideration that the period of time since the conflictive historical-political reality shown in Saizabitoria's novels has only continued to grow. In *100 metro*, some sort of instantaneity is



perceived when it comes to illustrate the oppression of the last years of Francoism and Basque society's attitude. Violence, repression and conflict mark the present of the narration, as the story tells us about how an ETA member runs his last hundred metres while escaping from the police until he is shot to death in Donostia's Constitution Square.

The individual memories that come to the mind of the protagonist during the run away are especially significant; memories that are linked to his childhood and youth, to his family or, basically, to the important personal and affective aspects of his life. Facing death, the mind of the fugitive goes back to the past and it is, in fact, those memories that show his personality: the book represents a character that is accustomed to lose, a perspective that humanizes the figure of the fugitive.

However, the perspective of the activist is not the only one that is shown in the novel, but quite the opposite, polyphony and the variety in viewpoints are remarkable in *100 metro*. That variety is presented through the contrast between different perspectives and voices. For example, the story of the child who suffered political-cultural repression during Franco's rule is juxtaposed with some extracts of news taken from media that followed the official Francoist discourse, or with trivial conversations or chitchat between anonymous citizens that talk, among other things, about the death of the activist. This polyphony illustrates the complexity of Basque society in the last years of the people, the fruitless sacrifice of the activist and the indifference of most of the citizens.



Even though it presents some differences, *Hamaika Pauso* (1995) also offers a picture of Basque Country in the last years of the Franco-era. The novel includes the fictionalized narration of the last five executions that were carried out by Spanish firing squads. In fact, Iñaki Abaitua who is the writer protagonist of the novel, writes *Hamaika Pauso*, the homonym novel about the execution of Daniel Zabalegi (Zabalegi is known to be the alter ego of the ETA member Angel Otaegi).

Here too, through the memories that come to Zabalegi's mind before being executed, the author presents a main character that grew accustomed to losing from an early age. A man that, even though he has not been very lucky in life, knows how to accept his fate. In short, we could reach the conclusion that both *100 metro* and *Hamaika Pauso* narrate, through the memories that come to them just before being killed, the death of a young person who dies in vain.

From *100 metro* to *Hamaika Pauso*, the narration becomes more reflective and self-referential, since the writer-protagonist and the homonym novel inside the novel allow for utilising various meta-narrative resources. The literary topics are the experiences in the last years of the Franco-era, but also memory itself and the act of

writing. The narration advances imitating the functioning of memory, employing fractured structure and time and repetitive motives.

Compared to those two novels, Saizabitoria's next novel, *Bihotz bi* (1996), goes further back in time and represents a more distant conflictive reality: in *Bihotz bi*, and his following novels, the intergenerational transmission of memories of the Civil War and the Basque nationalist legacy become the centre of the stories. However, it must be noted that instead of setting the narrations in wartime, he recovers those memories looking from a contemporary view. In that sense, it seems that the literary field is more productive when exploring the experiences and the consequences of the war from an affective and humanist point of view than when representing the events of the war, since literature can delve into details that witnesses are reluctant to transmit and historiography cannot get across to the public.



Izaro Arroita Azkarate  
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## Literature and Political Conflict

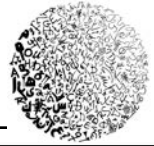
It's all interpretation. We have no way to approach reality if it is not through interpretation. And those interpretations, apart from being varied, are usually also opposed, even conflictive. When it comes to the political identity of the Basque Country, there is also a conflict between opposed interpretations that we have long been experiencing. But all interpretations do not have the same value: some of them are closer from truth, justice and democracy, from those ideals that are probably unachievable but necessary at the same time.

The political conflict in the Basque Country is still mainly a national conflict. On the one hand, there is Spain and its institutions that deny the national identity of the Basque Country and, on the other, there is a Basque *nationalism*, which reclaims its national identity and, as a consequence, aims to obtain sovereign political rights. The so-called Spanish *patriotic constitutionalism* denies those rights. Due to that position, a feeling of imposition and injustice takes hold of hundreds of thousands of Basque people, as we feel we own *all* the cha-

racteristic elements that a nation should have in order to be considered a nation: language, history, institutions, heritage, traditions, values, folklore... And a wish to persist. Spain disputes all of that by following a *fait accompli* logic: if there has never been a Basque nation, there will never be one. However, lack of logic is the only thing that a great many Basque people can see in that reasoning. And, here lies the source of the conflict.

Spain denies the conflict itself, which is a logical position, because recognising a conflict would mean recognising a political counterpart, that is to say, a Basque nation. Spain denies the fact that the Civil War was a war between nations in the Basque Country, even though numerous Basque people still believe that Basque combatants were, most of all, defending the Basque nation from Spanish authoritarianism. Regarding dictatorship, Spain disapproves that ETA took arms to fight against Francoism by highlighting ETA's violence and completely ignoring the Francoist repression that had mononational cultural assimilation as its objective.





## Literature and Political Conflict (continued from the previous page)

Regarding post-Franco-era, Spain despises the fact that ETA continued with its activity, which is something that a wide majority of the Basque society despise exactly in the same way, by the way. However, even though the vast majority of Basque people have, sooner or later, realised how non-sensical ETA's activity was, that fact does not prevent us from believing that, in spite of having taken wrong ways, ETA has acted incited by a political conflict. Spain, for its part, has Satanised post-Franco ETA by silencing the reality of the political conflict covering it up with the anti-terrorist monolithic discourse.

Some of those who deny the Basque nation have taken their crusade to Basque literature and those who write in Basque have received very strong collective accusations. In the last fifteen years, as well the Satanisation of ETA, there have been a generalisation of the discourse in Spain to protect ETA's victims, a discourse that is undoubtedly both solid and necessary. As a consequence of that, Basque writers have been accused of not having taken care of the victims, and with that, having refused their moral and, supposedly main, political obligation. It is true that, in Basque literature, victimisers have been portrayed far more frequently than victims, but the aforementioned accusations of immorality must be firmly disclaimed, since, over all, by writing about the victimisers, Basque literature has intended to point out to Basque society the unfairness of political violence. Not only should we reject the aforementioned accusations, but also acknowledge Basque literature for having had the opposite effect, that is to say, for having nurtured the auto critical and unilateral process ETA has been through until its disappearance with a firm and responsible attitude towards political violence. Basque society has long been asking ETA to stop. So has Basque literature.

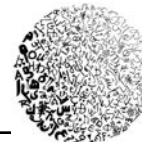
But Spanish nationalism does not easily give up. Lately, a novel written by non-Basque-speaker Basque citizen, Fernando Aramburu's *Patria* (2016), has become the standard bearer of the Spanish nationalism's new attack. The author himself has claimed when discussing the book that his aim was to defeat terrorism literarily. However, as I have just remarked, in Basque literature there has not been any obvious apologetic intention to support violence. Furthermore, according to many Spanish patriots, Aramburu's novel has won the so-called *battle for the story* and it turns out to be the ultimate writing that tells us what ETA has really been and, as well as that, how to remember ETA properly. However, in my opinion, *Patria's* main function, as well as having supposedly succeeded in its irrefutable discourse against violence, is to

deny the existing political conflict between the Basque Country and Spain, that is to say, to deny that Spain has a counterpart in the Basque Country. Some of the elements in the novel has been very obviously placed with that objective. For instance, all the characters that support ETA harbour all kinds of human lowness: they are foolish, wild, cruel, classist, racist, homophobic... They have embraced violence, but not because there were political reasons for it, but because they are mere monsters. Moreover, even though the narration focuses on the evil conscience of ETA members, the readers do not get the opportunity to delve into the mind of the torture agents of the Spanish security forces. Torture is very severely represented, but also as if it were only an automatic and inevitable reflex of the state. ETA's violence is disgusting, whereas the state's one is *natural*. Obviously, despising the violence that comes from one side and naturalising the one that comes from the other is just another way of denying the conflict. Finally, we should mention the main leitmotiv that structures *Patria's* plot; that is to say, the demand made to ETA members so that they apologised to the victims. This demand is not limited to the literary sphere: that was long ago included among the conditions that the Spanish state's judicial and political systems set for ETA prisoners who wanted to obtain improvements during their prison term. There are very few voices that have publicly opposed that discourse that improperly mixes up political issues with religious or sacred ones. But forgiveness and justice do not belong to the same field as human action and comprehension. Mixing both up, as in *Patria*, is foul play, a way to imply that the wrongdoing only comes from one side of the conflict and is, therefore, yet another way of denying it.

That is how Spain wants to win *the battle for the story*, by making us all admit that there has not been a real political conflict in the Basque Country. That is the memory that Spain wants to spread when it comes to the Basque conflict. But for hundreds of thousands of Basque people there has indeed been and is still a conflict, there is no doubt about that. For those hundreds of thousand people Spain's interpretation is as wrong as cruel. Those hundreds of thousands of people will stick to their interpretation and continue creating literature that captures that interpretation, as for them it is more real, just and democratic. Literature will still be there. So will the conflict.

**Gorka Mercero Altzugarai**  
Professor





# The importance of the consequences

Jokin Muñoz, who is probably the writer who has completed the best and most accurate representations of the consequences of the conflict in literature written in Basque, stated in an interview that our ill society had come to accept some atrocities as part of our daily life. "We all know what I am talking about: letters, menacing placards, cheers and calls that encourage ETA to continue killing, etc. Amongst us there was not much awareness of the pain that violence could cause. Because the protagonists of those events were *the others*. *The others or the enemies*".

Unfortunately, we have been immersed and even muddled in that "us-against-them" dialectic for too long, clinging to the rhetoric of the oppressors and the oppressed, being fuelled by the aesthetics of epic and revolution, scarcely and partially fixing our gaze and quill upon the human consequences of the conflict. I would say that our literature has shown little inclination to understand *the other* and that, even though a few decades ago Gabriel Aresti placed "human dignity" above all things, in the last decades, 'ideologisation' has prevailed among us, literary trench warfare that does not look around and does not invite to look. ETA's violence drew too long of a line which divided the world in two and the complicity and bridges that had once existed between Basque writers started to collapse. Moreover, we must not forget that some writers have been forcibly silenced and marginalised. Due to threats, many pages have been left blank and many words have been left untyped. Curiously enough, now it seems that everyone was against ETA, even inside the abertzale left (Basque nationalists/separatist left) spheres. Harkaitz Cano refers to that in *Twist* by "those things that are thought but not said". Literature is also responsible for dissecting the causes of that silence that lasted too long.

From 1970 to 2000, in the works that addressed the topic of the conflict, the activists were protagonists, their inner voices, and police repression, prison etc. were used to legitimate violence or to partially question its use, especially in the beginning. ETA's victims were not present in those novels, were not a literary topic. Those were "the others". And those that were supposedly part of "us", were usually shown varnished in a thin layer of loyal activism, as the only heroes and martyrs. Fortunately, our views and perspective got wider little by little, mainly thanks to the work of writers such as Anjel Lertxundi and Jokin Muñoz (*Zorion perfektua* and *Bizia lo* are examples of that effort). Bit by bit, the pain caused by violence has become the centre of our debates and, therefore, the centre of literature. Harkaitz Cano's *Twist* offered us a poetic and touching way of looking at violence putting 'ideologisation' aside. That pain has also stuck out in some of Iban Zaldúa's and Eider Rodriguez's short

stories. The works that I have just mentioned are the ones that have directly addressed the conflict, but we must not put aside those works that discuss it behind a mask or a metaphor. For example, it is not hard to find a recognisable geography of the pain suffered in our land in Lertxundi's *Otto pette* or Felipe Juaristi's *Airezko emakumeak*. Even though those two novels occur in different locations and times, they should not be understood as mere trips abroad, as they also talk about us; about that silent and heavy pain.

Erri de Luca wrote in his *The crime of a soldier* that the honour of a country lays on its heroes and witnesses. Those witnesses need to be willing to talk, to answer questions, even to the most awkward ones: Why has our silence lasted so long? Was it really necessary? Why were there so many alleged traitors? If we do not, things can be too easily forgotten or can fade away in silence and be repeated in a few years time. After the Civil War, many of those who fought sank into silence. They were devastated by pain. They did not want to share their atrocious experiences. That silence got increasingly heavy, it got increasingly deep and leaden. To a great extent, it was a forced silence that has been established by the dictatorship. The writer Svetlana Alixievich tells in her essay on the *homo sovieticus* that kitchens were very important in the Soviet Union, since that was the place where people would confess things that could not be said in the streets. That was the place where they said what they really thought. It is our responsibility to make sure that that silence and forgetfulness do not prevail, to make all the facets of our narrations visible; to ensure that the opposition of those things that are wrong is not limited to the area of the kitchen. Humanising the victims and those who died. That will be the challenge for our literature in the future. When we address literature and ethics, we are talking about a commitment that literature has, not to one side or the other, but to pain. Many pages have been written about Spain's dirty war, torture, dispersion and unfair detentions, because, obviously, it was (and it is still) absolutely necessary to write about them; but as I said before, little has been written about ETA's victims and those victim's environment or about the threats they received. About *the others*. I am hopeful that we will find a way to fill those blanks in the coming years.

Aritz Gorrotxategi Mujika  
Writer

