

ETA, one of *The other leprosy*

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The Hispanic territory is known for its wonderful aspects and for the fact that it offers to the people the opportunity to speak about and to embrace it. In this article I renounce to the warmth of beaches, the blue of seas, the giddy rhythms and the unforgettable Don Quijote, choosing to have a view of Spain as a country seen by an organization trying to get ahead through unjustified ways. Let us have a look upon this Hispanic citizenry, along the written lines, from the perspective of those who have been suffering, because of inhuman means through which the ETA organization fought for its ideals.

Euskadi Ta Askatasuna could be translated from euskera as Basque Homeland and Freedom, it is still more known by its abbreviation, ETA. It is a terroristic organization of Basque nationalistic ideology which struggles for the creation of a Basque independent socialist state.

The organization was founded on July 31st 1959 in Bilbao, during the franchist dictatorship, by a congregation of radical students. Three years after, in 1962, they celebrated, in the monastery Belloc in France, I Ansamlea,¹ which was defined as a clandestine revolutionary organization. The Basque terrorism is considered as a direct reaction to the franchist politics at the same time, a wish of accomplishment for an independent Basque state.

The ethnic conflict is one of the most complicated issues that a country is faced with, and Spain is not exempted from brittle relations between Pais Vasco and the other regions. It is a confrontation with social, political and economic consequences.

In the first years of activity, ETA is disposed by a great social support, which lately became less important. There are data that justify this, because, more than 60% of Basque people totally reject this organization and only 1% agree with all their actions.

¹ I Ansamlea – represents the bases of consolidation for the ETA organization and it is the right moment for announcing the armed fight as a means for achieving the independence of the Basque state.

The majority of Spanish people are against this organization due to the death and suffering that were brought into their lives, in their vision, standing the battle, mindless of human rights, it is an injustice and, at the same time, a cruelty act.

The organization continues to exist with the mention that today, the separatist group ETA announced in 2011 the complete disarmament by means of an online press statement of *Gara*² newspaper. The organization thought that it was time to take this decision after many years of struggle.

“El esperado anuncio de la banda terrorista se produce tan sólo tres días después de que se celebrara en San Sebastián la autodenominada *Conferencia de Paz* que concluyó con una *declaración de cinco puntos* en la que los representantes internacionales instaban a ETA a un cese definitivo de la violencia.”³ [The long-expected announcement of the terroristic group which is realized only at three days after celebrating in San Sebastian, *The Conference of Peace* finalized with a declaration of five points in which the international representatives were asking the ETA organization, a terminal throwing-down.]

This announcement was a long-expected one, because, craving for the finalization of terrorism acts which had as a result forty years of crimes and attempts causing the death of many people and brought anguish in state. To obtain the independence and to create a socialist state, the ETA group made different acts against the human rights such as sequestration, assassination and even terrorism. Since 2011, ETA is on the list of terroristic organizations by European Union and The United States of America mentioning that the terroristic group is responsible for the murder of 830 people.

These ethnic issues still exist, therefore, the matters come differently, with the resigning of the army fight from the ETA group. This organization did not achieve its purpose, especially, due to their decisions and deeds turning into an enemy against equality and solidarity. Also, it caused much social and economical loss, delineating a negative image from the perspective of the politicians, The Spanish and The Basque.

The ETA organization was and still is a very actual theme in cultural manifestations from Spain like cinema or literature. Throughout the years, this organization was the subject of many movies or books. We can give an example from cinema: Daniel Monzón's film, *Celda 211* (2009) or Aitor Merino's *Asier y*

² *Gara*- is a bilingual newspaper, edited in Guipúzcoa (territory of the autonomous community of Basque).

³ Fragment from the article that appeared on 20 october 2011 on the online newspaper *El mundo* (available on: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/10/19/espana/1319034890.html>).

yo (2013). From literature can be mentioned Raul Zelik with *El amigo armado* (2010) or Ramón Saizarbitoria with *Martuene* (2012).

The article's idea came up after having read Chufo Lloréns'⁴ book, *La otra lepra* (1993) in which the author dedicates a number of pages to this organization. The author's lines highlight actions which cannot be justified by anything, more precisely fascist ideas. The characters' fears and endurance attract our attention on the neglected victims and on the castaway struggle, giving rise to consequences which worsened many people's lives.

La otra lepra de Chufo Lloréns, reedited with the title *La pasión prohibida* and with a prologue of Nobel laureate Camilo José Cela, relates the story of two families marked by suffering in the first half of the twentieth century. It is a book filled with events and emotions. The main themes addressed in this book are: the pain provoked by the ETA organization's acts, the Spanish mental attitude in conjunction with homosexuality, forbidden passion and AIDS (known according to the English acronym AIDS).⁵

As the action in the book takes place in the period of 60's and a part of 70's, we can speak about an active presence of this organization which tried a recovery of its identity, a thing depending on the popular endeavour.

We understand that ETA is clearly a political movement and lately it intensified the activity of the army. There were people who wanted to be part of this system and, there were other people, too, who were cheated on for the benefit of the system and received rewards for doing favours, as the case of Paco Zambudio's character, sent to Libia for a military training.

ETA starts its transformation in a military organization that was in charge with training, inoculation of ideas and with precise rightfulness of acts that were unconscionable for all those who belonged to the system, including people like Paco Zambudio.

The army side of the group used terrorism to achieve its goals and to turn human beings into killing machines: "...al acabar los ocho meses era una perfecta máquina de matar, ajustada, engrasada y a punto."⁶ [at the end of the eight months it was a real killing machine, greased and adjusted].

The image of the organization is built up in a negative way. The acts tell their own story, and the characters do not find any explanation for themselves.

⁴ Chuffo Lloréns is a successful Spanish writer, especially known for the historical novel *Te daré la tierra* (2008), having been sold in over 150.000 copies in one day. He is a writer who recreates epochs and seduces the reader with the easiness of the writing, giving him the chance to travel in other temporal spaces.

⁵ AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

⁶ Chufo Lloréns, *La otra lepra* (Barcelona: P.C. Debolsillo, 2010), 123.

Chufu Lloréns is focused on the military side of this separatist group, that was in charge of training men involved in the system, in order to transform them in characters with mechanical motions, unscrupulous attitude and personal opinion.

The image of the organization is created through the already mentioned character, Paco Zambudio, by the endurance during the attacks, and, also, by the thoughts of the *civil guard*, Bernardo Montero Velez who, because of the fanatical ideas of this terroristic group, is killed, in the end.

Bernardo thought that the work for the neutralization of attacks coming from the ETA was “una triste y dramática partida de ajedrez en la que había que presentir los movimientos del rival para neutralizarlo. [...] Allí morían guardias civiles, policías nacionales, municipales, aforados o paisanos, en una terrible e inútil guerra que solo los ciegos podían creer que servía para algo.”⁷ [a sad and dramatic game of chess in which you should have predicted the rival’s moves in order to neutralize him... There were dying *civil guards*, national policemen, municipals, influent people or simple citizens, in a terrible and unavailing war, a war that only the blind could believe it was something useful.]

Bernardo Montero’s death is just an example of a destiny of one of the members of ETA. The family’s suffering is a history related by the author to highlight the obscurity, the forgotten victims in the mist of time and the limits that overcome themselves through unjustified actions only to attain the proposed aims.

The characters in the book are authentic and I think that many readers can identify themselves with them. The characters are well-shaped and manage to diffuse much of it by image, thoughts and language. Through characters and their acts, we find out several issues which the Spanish society is faced with, such as the terroristic attacks of ETA.

By reading the pages of the ETA organization’s theme we may notice the obscurity, the hatred and suffering faced by the characters. They give us the impression of being part of the history.

At the same time, we may notice that the acts of this organization always bring evil consequences as if the pain and human life did not count for fascist ideas and for the goals that should have been accomplished.

The author offers the opportunity to discover new events and to apprehend new perspectives of life. We turn the pages of the terroristic group as we turn the pages of the book of life itself, clearly expressing the experiences and fears.

⁷ Lloréns, *La otra lepra*, 145.

The words in this book are an expression of history and of human life, that could be, directly or indirectly, a repercussion for the defining of different attitudes and motivations.

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