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Basques on the BBC and Radio Paris (1941-1957)

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a research study on Basque participation in two major European broadcasting companies: the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the French Broadcasting Corporation (better known as 'Radio Paris') during the period 1941 to 1957. The Basque presence in French radio broadcasting, specifically, the participation of the priest Alberto Onaindia, is well known. However, there is very little knowledge of his collaboration with the BBC, and absolutely nothing is known about the broadcasts in the Basque language that began on the British station in 1947. The aim of this article, therefore, is to offer a general comprehensive overview of the Basque presence in the BBC and in Radio Paris. This is achieved firstly by providing new information on Onaindia's work on both stations, and secondly, by giving an outline of the BBC's broadcasts in Basque. Unpublished documentation has been used from four important Basque archives: the Basque Historical Archive, the Basque Nationalism Archive of the Sabino Arana Foundation, the archive of Eusko Ikaskuntza (Society of Basque Studies) and the Archive of the Labayru Institute.

The research results will be presented as follows. Firstly, I will discuss the work conducted by Onaindia initially on the BBC and then on Radio Paris. Secondly, the focus will shift to the broadcasts in Basque within the Spanish-language programmes of the BBC. Finally, I will draw some brief conclusions and provide future avenues for research.

Keywords: Basque exile, Franco dictatorship, BBC, Radio Paris, the Basque language