

Book Review

**Note on the book review published in SNM 5 (2020):
Barbara Loyer on Ludger Mees, *The Basque Contention. Ethnicity, Politics, Violence*, Routledge, London / New York, 2020, p. 232-240.***

This is not a reply to the arguments expressed by Barbara Loyer in her review. Though not sharing many of them, I accept them as academically legitimate points of view. However, for reasons only the author knows, the review contains some errors and statements that do not correspond to reality. In order to prevent readers who have not read the book from being misguided, here are some clarifying remarks:

1. According to Loyer, on p. 4 of the book 'Mees states "I have myself been traumatized by ETA's cruelty and by the cynicism of some of its defenders, and I have grown admiring of the force of a number of its opponents – some of which have become my friends"' (p. 233). The reality is that this statement does not appear on p. 4 of the book, nor on any other of the following or previous pages. Apparently, it has been invented.

2. According to Loyer, Mees is 'subliminally' setting 'nationalism as a natural evidence that simply emerges from this territory, and not the product of a very efficient politics' (p. 238). The reality is that, besides highlighting the crucial importance of the 'invention and popularization of national apparatus (...) and different festivities', the analysis of early Basque nationalism concludes placing emphasis precisely on the constructive elements of nationalist politics: 'The mobilization of Basque

nationalists required their prior emotionalization, which was facilitated through the movement's organizational design as a community of believers, the symbolic transmission of political messages and the celebration of the nation through festivities and monuments' (p. 59).

3. According to Loyer, 'the books that bring a contradictory perspective on his implicit thesis, that the nationalist ideology is in essence democratic, are not mentioned'. Besides the fact that no such generalizing statement about the 'democratic essence' of nationalism can be found on any of the pages of the book, a second observation must be made. Juan Pablo Fusi and Antonio Rivera, listed by Loyer as among the authors who have been alleged victims of such a selective and partisan bibliographical approach (p. 237), are in fact cited throughout the book on several occasions. Indeed, Fusi's pioneering study on labor politics in the Basque Country is quoted on p. 49, endnote 44 and on p. 82, note 3. Different publications by Rivera are quoted on p. 26, notes 25, 26 and 28; on p. 85, note 37; on p. 141, note 6, and on p. 265, note 12 and 15.

Ludger Mees

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