

## **ABERRI EGUNA 2001**



Holding of the Aberri Eguna beside the Tree of Gernika on the 15th of April. A call to citizens to show the ikurriña (the Basque flag) on their balconies and to mayors to do the same on the façades of town halls.

### **RESPECT FOR EUSKAL HERRIA**

We are holding this year's Aberri Eguna, the first of the new millennium, in the midst of a politically convulsed and heavy climate, with Basques from three territories going to the polls next May, with an organization such as ETA which, by disregarding and showing contempt for demands formulated by Basque society with a view to the definitive abandonment of violence, persists in its policy and with a state strategy which, with all the power and means at its disposal, is practising generic rhetoric involving the criminalization of nationalism, eroding the pillars of a democratic system to such an extent that basic rights such as ideological freedom, freedom of expression and association are threatened and reduced according to the political opportunity and interest of those who administer a single line of thought.

Those of us who believe in the existence of the Basque people and in the construction of the Basque nation, do not accept the fact that an attempt is being made to confuse rejection of violence with a renunciation of one's own legitimate ideas, that an attempt is being made to confuse the persecution of the crime with the criminalization of ideas and with a reduction in freedoms and rights.

We are municipally-elected councillors from the seven Basque territories; we believe in the existence of a people with its own history and will, with shared and complementary cultural, territorial, linguistic and social realities.

We recognize ourselves within that reality and we seek to shape an increasingly more related, more understanding, less dependent political community that is master of its own future, through knowledge, mutual respect and the free adherence of people and territories.

In view of the despair which the persistence of violence causes among us, in view of so much self-interested political influence, on the day when the Aberri Eguna is being held, UDALBILTZA wishes to raise its voice with respect, clarity and firmness and reiterate the democratic foundations and political principles to all Basques which are understood as having to preside over and guide the project of the construction of the Basque nation.

1. - An unequivocal commitment to humanitarian principles and to the defence of rights and freedoms of the individual. The right of life and dignity of the individual constitutes the core basis of our way of interpreting reality, politics, society and our aspirations and strategic

projects.

Through solidarity and the defence of that dignity to which all of us are subject without exception, we are beside all the victims and people threatened by the senselessness of ETA in our towns and neighbourhoods. We are municipally-elected councillors and we wish to be especially beside all those threatened councillors and their families.

2.- Basque social and national construction must be sustained using democratic channels, in freedom and with the will and power of decision-making of citizens, rejecting the use of violence and respecting the human rights of all people and being respected at all times and without exception, including those deprived of freedom. Violence and national construction are incompatible. Means and ends are linked to the same axis: exclusively democratic political action.

ETA violence, as well as being ethically and morally execrable and destroying coexistence, helps to objectively and efficiently promote the strategy of those whose aim and historic mission is to hinder and prevent Basque nationalists from freely developing a project of a country which is master of its own destiny.

3. - Basque citizens - both men and women - constitute the subjects of the Basque nation. The free and democratic exercise of citizens' will does not allow either for the imposition of immovable frameworks or projects imposed by force.

We are, in addition to being the oldest people in Europe, who speak a language - Euskera - which constitutes the only living testament of European history, a country located between two States that wishes to overcome the consequences of the systematic denial of its national identity, consequences which have given rise to a disjointed political and cultural reality and a demographic, economic, asymmetrical and uneven evolution.

4. - From the conviction that a high regard for freedom makes a people strong and definitively banishing violence, individual and collective intimidation from our midst, peace is our priority and national and social construction is our legitimate project.

We have hope and the capacity to work. We believe in the men and women of our people. Whether Euskadi-Euskal Herria proves to be the protagonist of its present and master of its future depends on all of us.

**GORA EUSKADI ASKATUTA!**  
**LONG LIVE THE BASQUE COUNTRY!**

Gernika, on the 15th of April 2001

