The Future of Basque Nationalism in Iparralde

(The Future of Basque Nationalism in Iparralde)

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BIBLID [0212-7016 (1999), 44: 1; 69-88]

Frantzia aldeko egungo euskal abertzaletasunaren izaera aztertzen du artikulu honek eta, bestalde, etorkizunean haren baitan eragina izan dezaketen faktore nagusiak seinalatzen ditu: Espainia aldeko euskal mugimenduaren eragin ideologikoak, frantses gobernuaren mesfidantza euskal mugimenduarekin negoziatzeko orduan eta Iparraldeko mugimendu abertzaleak —premiarik gabeko barne gatazkek ahuldurik— elkar hartzeko burutu beharko dituen eginahalak.

Giltz-Hitzak: Euskal abertzaletasuna Frantzian. Frantses gobernuaren politika. Oinarrizko gaiak Frantziako euskal abertzaletasunari buruz. Euskara eta euskal kultrua. Indarkera. Moderazio eta batasun politikoak.

Este artículo examina la naturaleza del nacionalismo vasco contemporáneo en Francia e identifica los principales factores que pueden ejercer influencia sobre su futura evolución: las influencias ideológicas del movimiento vasco español, la reticencia del gobierno francés a la hora de negociar con el movimiento vasco y los esfuerzos del movimiento vasco-francés por unirse en una causa común y superar la tradición de conflictos internos que innecesariamente ha debilitado el bando nacionalista vasco en Francia.

Palabras Clave: Nacionalismo vasco en Francia. Política del gobierno francés. Cuestiones básicas sobre el nacionalismo vasco en Francia. Lengua y cultura vascas. Violencia. Moderación y unidad políticas.

Dans cet article on étudie la nature du nationalisme basque contemporain en France et on identitifie les principaux facteurs qui peuvent exercer une influence sur son évolution future: les influences idéologiques du mouvement basque espagnol, la réticence du gouvernement français au moment de négocier avec le mouvement basque et les efforts du mouvement basco-français pour s'unir en une cause commune et surmonter la tradition de conflits internes qui a affaibli inutilement le parti nationaliste basque en France.

Mots Clés: Nationalisme basque en France. Politique du gouvernement français. Questions de base sur le nationalisme basque en France. Langue et culture basques. Violence. Modération et unité politiques.

"All things change… There is nothing in the world which is permanent.
Everything flows onward; all things are brought into being with a changing nature;
the ages themselves glide by in constant movement."

Ovid, circa 8 a.d[1].

"Lehen hala, Orai hola
Gero ez jakin nola."
"Once it was like that. Now it is like this.
In the future, who's to know."

Basque Proverb

One of the greatest uncertainties confronting the Basque people on the eve of the new millennium is the future content of Basque nationalism as a political idea. Will the new millennium provide a place for minority group politics within the accelerating logic of a united Europe? Will the Basques be able to reverse now longstanding forces of socioeconomic and cultural assimilation that threaten their survival on this eve of the new century?

Questions like these pose a fundamental challenge to the idea of Basque nationalism by asking "what, "why," and "how?" What is the purpose of Basque nationalism today, and what kind of appeal can it make for popular support? Can extra-legal movements transcend the dialectic of violence and integrate themselves back into the legitimate mainstream of Basque political and cultural life? Will a unitary state like France be willing to implement policies to insure the survival of Basque language on its territory? These questions pose fundamental challenges for the Basque movement, and together they raise the question of the trajectory of Basque nationalism in the new millennium. My purpose in this article is to discuss the future of Basque nationalism in France. I intend to extend the historical analysis of Basque nationalism in France that I made in the *Hills of Conflict*[2], and to suggest some of the elements that will affect the future of Basque nationalism in France based on the trajectory of contemporary events.

The rise of a nationalist movement needs to be understood as a reaction to its environment. As the Basque bibliographer Jon Bilbao once put it, "nationalism is the sign of a people who are unwilling to die." In the course of the past century, the trajectory of French Basque politics has differed from that of Spanish Basques because of the differing historical and institutional circumstances in which each took root. The evolution of Basque nationalism in France is an artifact of Basque culture and institutions. It is also a story about France. The political evolution of the French Basques needs to understood in light of several overlapping layers of context to explain the content of Basque political mobilization in France today. For the French Basques those influences range from the micro to the macro. Basque identity and political mobilization in France are a product of the combination of several of these contextual factors. Among them are: the internal socioeconomic, political and demographic dynamics of the Pays Basque in the late twentieth century; the external influence of the Spanish Basques and their impact on their ethnic kin in France; the critically important context of a French political culture that has historically refused to recognize minority demands; and, finally, the impact of broader trends in Europe ranging from the emerging

1. Pythagoras in *Metamorphoses*, Book 15.

2. James E. Jacob, *Hills of Conflict; Basque Nationalism in France;* Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1994,

politics of the European Union to the resurgence of nationalism and self-determination in the aftermath of the fall of communism. Taken together, they define the historical evolution of Basque militancy in France and provide the framework for understanding the future trajectory of Basque nationalism.

THE STATE OF BASQUE NATIONALISM IN FRANCE IN THIS FIN DE SIECLE

The study of Basque politics demonstrates that the coming of the millennium is, at best, an artificial watershed in the history of the Basque people. Viewed from this fin de siecle, it clear that many of the most important trends at work in the Pays Basque, and in the nationalist camp, have their origins stretching back to the 1960's if not before. The primary goals of Basque political mobilization in France have been moderated over time but remain largely unrealized in the unitary French State. Abertzale ("Basque Patriot") calls for independence from France in the 1960's have given way to more realistic calls today for the creation of a separate Basque department within a sovereign and intact France. Despite the prominence given to the sanctity of the integrity of its territory in the history of French ideas, even the Basques' willingness to accept a greater autonomy within a sovereign France has been rebuffed. While the creation of new departments has occurred, including in Corsica, the government continues to fear that any political or administrative accommodation will be a way station on the road to separatism and independence. This has been true for even cultural and linguistic claims. Despite an unbroken chain of devoted militancy, cultural groups have been largely unable to significantly extend state support of the Basque language school system, or Ikastolas, over the past thirty years. From the time of the Revolution onward, France has been unwilling to encourage the preservation of France's minority languages, preferring instead to watch as broader historical trends lead to their inevitable assimilation.

In the case of the Basques, however, government policy has developed in response to its fear of separatism and the rise of indigenous Basque political violence in France. Separatist violence, whether in Corsica, Brittany or the Pays Basque strikes directly at the core of Jacobin values. The integrity of French territory has been central to the French civic religion since the Revolution, and made of Basque nationalism an adversary in a game without compromise. From the standpoint of the state, since indigenous Basque violence first appeared in France by those close to the Ikastola movement, it has refused on principle to make concessions even on the mildest educational or cultural issues for fear of legitimizing the abertzale camp and creating a slippery slope of increasing Basque political demands.

The rise of political violence among French Basques is the most controversial aspect of abertzale militancy in France over the last quarter century. It has led to the fragmentation of the abertzale movement, and discredited the nationalist cause in the eyes of the electorate and the state. Today, many militants understand that the use of violence (and the threat of separatism) has led the preservation of the Basque language to become a hostage between the French government and the radical fringe of the abertzale camp in France.

There is no Y2k problem that would mark a new and distinct threshold for Basque nationalism with the turn of the millennium. Rather, as we approach the new century, it is clear that the agenda of Basque political mobilization in France has been influenced since the 1960's by the policies and actions of successive French governments across the political spectrum. Evidence suggests that whether controlled from the right or left of the French political spectrum, the State reflects an ongoing Jacobin ideal that opposes the linguistic and political rights of indigenous minority groups as a doctrine of faith.

What *is* important about the coming of the millennium, however, is its importance as a symbolic threshold separating the past and the future. In that way, the new millennium represents a kind of unfolding *tabula rasa* onto which the collective hopes and dreams of a people can be cast. In the thousand years since the coming of the first millennium, the popular image of the coming of the millennium has carried with it the notion of epochal change and apocalyptic justice. It holds the promise of legitimating the best of contemporary circumstances while offering the possibility of redemption and change. For peoples threatened with assimilation and the dilution of their language and culture, the millennium also offers its legitimating imprimatur for those cultures that can demonstrate the ability to culturally and linguistically adapt to the demands of the future, and survive as distinct language groups. It is clear that for it to survive, Basque culture must be of the future and not simply a museum of a cherished cultural past. As it faces the future, one dimension of the adaptation of Basque culture will be determined, in part, on www.euskadi.com.

THE CORE QUESTIONS OF BASQUE NATIONALISM

Viewed from this fin de siecle, the abertzale camp in France is not alone in viewing the coming millennium with a mixture of hope and concern. At the same time, contemporary abertzale militants are still asking many of the same questions that have been asked by successive generations of Basque nationalists in France stretching back to Chanoine Pierre Lafitte's Aintzina in the 1930's.

One of the most important of those questions concerns the "why" and "what" of Basque nationalism–the motives behind the rise of identity-based politics and its goals. Equally important for each generation of militants in the twentieth century has been the preoccupying "how" or the means to attract wider support among the Basque-speaking population. The challenge of Basque politics in the last third of the century is that at each ideological crossroads, the abertzale movement was often more willing to opt for 'ideological purity' and a harder line than for more modest and less threatening goals destined to win more public support. While the faces change, as do their ideological labels, many of these questions and answers continue to define an ongoing dialogue within the abertzale camp in France. Often, as we will see below, this internal debate has led to preoccupying internal conflicts and internecine struggle when the Basque cause could afford it least. These debates have served, however, to define the content of Basque militancy in France.

THE QUESTION OF BASQUE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

One of the greatest cultural and demographic contrasts between the Basque provinces of France and Spain is reflected in the rural, agrarian nature of the Pays Basque francais in contrast to the far more urban context of the Basque Country in Spain. In this traditionally rural linguistic space, the total number of Basque speakers in France has been variously estimated at approximately seventy thousand people, or about ten percent of the Basque speaking population of Spain. Today, the virtual totality of French Basques are bilingual in French. Demographically, those who speak Basque as a mother tongue are growing older, while French is increasingly the first language of Basque youth. These trends demonstrated a longer struggle against cultural assimilation that stretched back at least to the French Third Republic. By the end of World War One, it was clear that the process of francophone assimilation was fully engaged in the agricultural interior of the Pays Basque. At the same time, the cradle of Basque language use in France, the rural interior continued a process of

depopulation that had first begun, in some cases, in the mid-nineteenth century. The common motivation of many heirs and non-heirs alike after World War Two has been to leave the land and seek a better quality of life in occupations in the cities of the Basque coast or beyond. As a result, the best that might be hoped for was that the children of these Basque emigrants might be bilingual, at best. It was for this reason that groups like IKAS, Seaska and its Ikastolas, Gau Eskoka and Ikastaldi, among others, were created–to seek to reverse these linguistic trends, especially among children in kindergarten and primary school. The greatest obstacle these groups have had has been the indifference of the French State and its unwillingness to adequately fund the Ikastolas as Basque language "charter schools." One of the earliest platforms of Enbata and succeeding movements in France has been the defense of Basque language and culture threatened today as never before.

One of the greatest indicators of the process of assimilation at work in the Basque country has been the decline of Basque language use in France. These declines have been greatest among Basque youth aged sixteen to twenty-five[3]. Twenty-five years ago, fully forty-seven percent of Basques of this age spoke Basque. Today, that number has fallen to only *seventeen* percent. More important for the future, only *six percent* of Basque children under the age of sixteen speak Basque as their mother tongue. As Erramon Bachoc, President of the Institut Culturel and a sociolinguist by training, put it, "the use of the Basque language by Basque families and children is now in virtual "free fall". This comes despite forty years of effort by Basque cultural groups to reverse what seem to be accelerating and nearly inevitable tides of assimilation.

In 1996, the defense of the language was given further prominence when it figured prominently in this "Schema d'Amenagement du Pays Basque"–a blueprint for the social and economic revitalization of the Pays Basque. Three years later, however, the "Conseil de la Langue Basque" called for in the "Schema" has yet to be created because of conflicts between competing Basque cultural groups.

If the French government has been largely unwilling to liberalize its policies regarding minority language use in France, the growing authority of the European Union has offered European minorities another forum in which to seek cultural and linguistic support. The broader issue of human rights has been a visible concern of the foreign policy of the European Union as well as of the European Parliament. Indeed, Turkey's application for admission to the E.U. had been placed on hold for a number of reasons, among them include its handling of the Kurdish problem, as well as its record on the rights of prisoners and journalists.

The issue of language policy is one dimension of human rights where the will of Europe may force changes in French domestic policy. The European Union's adoption of the long-awaited "European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages" was at best a symbolic gesture in support of Europe's cultural richness. Yet it must have been satisfying to Basque militants of the 1960's, coming as it did some thirty-five years after Enbata had joined Breton and Occitan groups and the Mouvement Federaliste Europeenne in calling for the creation of a "Europe of Ethnic Groups."

The reality was the Charter was only *symbolic* in nature and did not have a mechanism to force changes in national policy. This, of course, was the great fear of European unification–its threat to the sovereign authority of existing states. While France formally

3. *Enbata,* no. 1571 (1 avril 1999), p. 5.

signed the weakened and amended Charter, it did not formally ratify it[4]. Then, in July 1999, France's highest court ruled that the Charter constituted a threat to French unity and was in violation of Article Two of the French Constitution, as recently amended, that stated that, "The language of the Republic is French"[5]. If agricultural policy is any indication, It is clear that the rise of the European Union will lead to further efforts to bypass Paris and other capitals in making the case for minority languages and cultures in this larger political forum. For itself, the French government is far more concerned with shoring up the use of the French language, which is under assault by English as never before[6]. Both the United Nations and the European Union have made clear their preferences for English over French in official communications. But nowhere is this clearer than in language use on the Internet. In 1999, English constituted the language of nearly 60% of Internet messages compared to only 4.3% for French[7].

BASQUE POLITICAL CULTURE IN FRANCE

One of the greatest contextual obstacles facing the rise of a secular Basque nationalist tradition in France has been the difficulty successive abertzale movements have faced in gaining the support of the Basque public. One cause has been the long association between Basque culture and language and the Catholic religion among this people that is one of the most religiously devout in France. For much of French Basque history in the past two centuries, it was the Basque clergy who served as a highly legitimate ethnic elite in the rural and agricultural interior that was the cradle of Basque culture in France. "Eskualdun, Fededun," ("He who says Basque, says a believer") captured a conservative Basque political culture that viewed Enbata and more radical groups to come as fundamentally suspect. The challenge facing Enbata in the 1960's was to wrest control of Basque cultural symbols from the hands of the clergy and their conservative allies, and to legitimate their own role as the first secular nationalist movement the French Basques had ever seen. This was the critical test for any new political movement–to gain public acceptance and legitimacy for itself as a representative of the Basque people. This has continued to be a defining challenge for each new Basque political movement in the last third of the century. Successive abertzale movements or parties in France have had to confront the continuing presence of two obstacles to Basque political mobilization–the indifference if not hostility of much of this conservative Basque-speaking population coupled with the active institutional opposition of France and its political class.

For both of these groups, the very idea of Basque independence has been the subject of indifference if not derision or hostility. One example concerns Napoleon who, in 1804, greeted Basque statesman Dominique-Joseph Garat, former Deputy to the Constituent Assembly in 1789, and later Senator, Count of the Empire, and trusted ambassador –and a vocal believer in the idea that the Basques were descendants of the Phoenicians– by asking, "Well now,

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4. "La France signe la Charte europeenne," *Enbata*, no. 1576 (6 mai 1999), p. 3.

5. Jon Henley, "France makes sure French is nation's only language," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1999, p. A22.

6. *Le Figaro* opposed the La Charte europeenne des langues because it threatened the French language at a time when, "…it is being bastardized by Anglo-Saxon words." Cited in "Bad news for Francophiles: United Nations, European Union prefer English," Nando News Online, January 22, 1999.

7. "Global Internet Statistics (by Language)," Source: www.euromktg.com, August 4, 1999.

Monsieur Garat, how goes the ideology?"[8]. It was not, however, until the appearance of Chanoine Pierre Lafitte's clerical movement, Aintzina, in the 1930's that the Church's control over Basque language and politics was even brought into question among this people who were among the most faithful believers in France. Lafitte was a progressive clerical voice for his time, but could and would not go beyond a cautious clerical regionalism for fear of antagonizing the Church hierarchy. While Lafitte's militancy would influence the consciousness of two generations of French Basque militants, there were issues he was unwilling to address publicly in the mid-1930's. Thus, we see little in the pages of Aintzina about either Sabino Arana Goiri and the rise of Basque Nationalism in Spain, or even about the Spanish Civil War that was devastating the Spanish Basques twenty miles away. As modest as were the ideas of Lafitte and his followers, they attracted the attention of the powerful deputy of the rural interior, Jean Ybarnegaray, who stigmatized the young priest as being a "red" (read "communist") fish swimming in a baptismal font[9]. Ybarnegaray represented the values of the traditionally dominant clerical and conservative French-Basque political culture in the first half of the century. This political conservatism was passed to succeeding generations along with the Basque language and culture. So, even today, the Basque movement measures the success of its electoral strategy by hard fought percentage point gains in the Bascophone interior.

Time did little to soften this reflexive opposition to the rise of new Basque political voices. This explains the challenge that Enbata and succeeding movements have faced in gaining popular support for their secular nationalism since the 1960's. The gulf between the perceptual universe of Basque farmers in the rural reaches of Basse-Navarre, Labourd or Soule was a far reach from the milieu of the urban coast with its mixture of languages and cultural assimilation where Basque nationalism first appeared in France. These rural Basque families were the cradle of Basque culture in France, and viewed new ideas and even the idea of change, itself, with understandable suspicion. One of the greatest challenges Enbata faced was its difficulty in claiming to speak in the defense of Basque language and culture when many of its early militants were not native speakers of the language. This proved to be a gulf that separated these assimilated service-sector intellectuals from the reality of native Basque-speakers in the agricultural interior. The majority viewed Enbata as a threat to a familiar and structured way of life. Having emerged shortly after the first wave of ETA refugees seeking asylum in France in the early 1960's, Enbata was seen from the beginning by the public as well as the government as carrying ETA's ideological water and of providing both public and private support for ETA and its militants. The impact of ETA, its own ideological peregrinations, and its use of violence have been important influences on the development of the French Basque movement from the founding of Enbata in 1963.

One of the most important of ETA's impacts on the French Basque movement was in helping steer the ideological debate among French Basque militants following Enbata's abortive electoral defeats in 1967 and 1968, its prosecution by the French state, and its end as a movement in 1974. Yet, first as a movement and then for the past twenty-five years as a Basque nationalist weekly newspaper, Enbata has played a central role in the evolution of Basque nationalist thought in France. Jacques Abeberry's editorials in Enbata, and op-ed pieces by Richard Irazusta, Jean-Louis Davant, Jean Haritschelar, and others, have reflected the evolution of Basque political and cultural thought in France.

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8. Cited in Eugène Goyheneche, *Le Pays Basque*, Pau: SNERD, 1979, p. 382.

9. The pun is based on the French term for goldfish "poisson rouge" that translates as red fish. See my *Hills of Conflict,* chapter three.

Following the defeat of its electoral strategy in 1967 and 1968, Enbata was wracked by internal conflict over strategy and personalities. It fell victim, then, to the kind of internecine warfare that the late abertzale historian, Eugen Goyheneche, called the tragic "tradition of tribal struggle" within the Basque movement[10]. These interpersonal and political conflicts within the abertzale camp served to focus the movement's attention inward and prevented it from extending its level of popular support within the Basque community.

Understandably, in the desire to find a new ideological coherence and reason for being, Enbata's remaining members turned to ETA as a logical and convenient case for inspiration. Ending its short hiatus after its electoral defeats in 1968, Enbata turned in its first new issue to a long interview with an ETA spokesman who elaborated on the addition of Marxist goals to traditional Basque nationalist goals of independence. The growing ties of Enbata to ETA were the primary reason former Enbata leader Ximun Haran claimed he quit the movement. He later went on to found and lead the French section of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

RADICALIZATION OF THE BASQUE MOVEMENT

Two broad political alternatives emerged out of Enbata's demise in 1974 that continue to influence Basque nationalist thought in France today. Both were part of ETA's ideological legacy, and reflected its impact on the political development of the French Basque movement. The first of those alternatives mirrored the leftward move of ETA in the 1960's, and led in Spain as in France to the rise of the most leftist of abertzale movements in the north in EHAS (Euskal Herriko Alderdi Sozialista (EHAS). EHAS differentiated itself from Enbata in the purity of its Marxist analysis and its view of the primacy of the economic struggle over the national one. EHAS also represented the first abertzale movement in the north to formally unite with its counterpart in Spain, thus creating the first party that, nominally at least, was present on both sides of the border.

What EHAS reflected was also a growing preoccupation with the ideological debates taking place within the abertzale left in Spain. EHAS tried to accelerate the rise of Basque political consciousness in France by grafting the ideological content of Spanish Basque doctrines onto the French Basque condition. The problem was that the political context of Basque life in Spain was not the same as in France, and the importation of Spanish Basque ideologies *out of whole cloth* was as immediately suspect as it was ill-advised. Any analysis of Enbata's experience had to take account of the hostility it provoked from within traditional Basque society and its elites. So it was difficult to explain how an even more avowed and hard line Marxist party might succeed where Enbata, itself, had been unable to make significant inroads among the conservative French Basque electorate.

ON THE QUESTION OF VIOLENCE

The second political alternative that appeared in France and reflected ETA's influence was the appearance of indigenous violence carried out by French Basque militants in France for the first time. The embrace of the 'armed struggle' represented a new and portentous threshold in the political history of French Basques. Despite the fact that ETA had been using violence as a political weapon against the Spanish state for much of the 1960's, the first

10. See his comments in the publication of the French Basque affiliate of the Basque Nationalist Party, *Ager,* no. 166 (October 1, 1990), p. 5.

incident of indigenous Basque political violence didn't occur in France until 1973, and then not again until the decade's end. In 1973, a previously unheard of group calling itself Iparretarrak (IK), or "Those of ETA of the North," claimed responsibility for the first act of political violence carried out by French Basques, an attack on a Pharmacy in the Basse-Navarrese town of St. Etienne de Baigorry[11]. For the next twenty-five years, as its older militants have been captured, new generations have been seduced by the Robin Hood image of the armed struggle, and have attempted to use violence as a lever against the French State and society. In subsequent attacks ranging over the next twenty five years, Iparretarrak's target list ranged from the symbolic to the real–from real estate speculators profiting from the tourist economy of the rural interior to the presence of the French state and its agencies in the Pays Basque.

The rise of Iparretarrak was important for a number of reasons. First, it represented the first example of French Basque militants willing to engage in acts of violence as a tool of Basque politics. Second, the young group's very name reflected the impact of ETA's tactical and doctrinal writings on violence, and IK's desire to carry out similar acts of violence in the different circumstances of the French Pays Basque. It is interesting to note that ETA was reported to be unhappy with IK's violence, fearing that it would threaten the northern sanctuary for ETA's militants. Third, IK was the first French Basque movement whose early militants came principally from the rural interior, especially Basse-Navarre. As such, it stood in contrast to movements from Aintzina to Enbata and beyond whose militants came primarily from the urban coastal cities. It was the nature of IK's militants as "children of the village" that enabled them to recruit among milieux that Enbata couldn't penetrate. They could also speak from firsthand knowledge about the problems of the rural agricultural economy, depopulation, and real estate speculation.

Fourth, with its roots in the linguistic reality of the rural interior, and in contrast to its predecessors, most of Iparretarrak's militants spoke *Basque* as their mother tongue. This stood in clear contrast to many of Enbata's early militants whose first language was French. As a result, according to other militants, the generation of militants of EMA and IK judged the worth of a competing political idea in part on one's ability to speak Basque. By raising the bar for what constituted an abertzale, IK sought to win control over Basque linguistic and cultural issues for itself. For the French government, the rise of Iparretarrak signaled ETA's contamination of even Basque educational and linguistic groups in France. Arising in part out of groups in defense of the Basque language, IK confirmed the wisdom of French hardliners who believed that any concessions ***at all*** to the abertzale camp would be unwise. The Jacobin fear was that such concessions would engender a rising cycle of Basque demands that would lead, at the extreme, to the territorial disintegration of France and the uniting of the seven Basque provinces of France and Spain into an independent Euskadi. Because the government saw the link between IK and educational groups like Seaska and the Ikastola movement, it was unwilling to consider even modest educational or linguistic concessions despite their potential to encourage Basque moderation as an alternative to isolate and undercut the radical camp.

IK adopted as its organization structure the two-sided ETA and IRA model in which the movement had a public as well as a clandestine face. IK's early public face was the Herri Taldeak movement that later gave way to Ezkerreko Mugimendu Abertzalea or EMA. In both cases, the dividing line separating their militants from IK was very much unclear. French authorities and even many other abertzale saw them as one and the same.

11. Ibid., ch. six.

As it viewed the terrain of Basque political action in France, IK *was* correct early on in believing that the Basque cause was weakened by the unnecessary duplication of movements and their platforms. They were unwilling, however, to critically analyze the impact of their violence on the abertzale cause. Their solution was to threaten to turn their violence inward and to force other movements to join them or give way. In so doing, they sought to eliminate any competition for primacy in the abertzale community in France[12]. As a result of IK's unmistakable threats to its leaders, EHAS disbanded. What IK's threats represented was a cycle of ideological "outbidding" that sought to hijack the political dialogue taking place in the Pays Basque. What it served to do was to splinter the abertzale community over the question of violence, and to further discredit the idea of Basque nationalism in France among the public and the state. Beginning in the mid-1970's, the Basque movement turned to embrace either Marxism, or violence, or both, and this signaled the further radicalization of the Basque nationalist camp.

The rise of Iparretarrak has been the most controversial political issue in modern Basque politics in France. In truth, its appearance has had two important and contradictory effects on Basque political mobilization in France. First, it has undoubtedly served as a consciousness-raising device among young Basques eager to find a vehicle for their evolving political beliefs. At the same time, the Basque electorate as a whole is more sympathetic to the Basque nationalist cause at century's end than at any other time in their history. It does not seem coincidental to note that the level of support for abertzale candidates has nearly tripled in the twenty-five years since Iparretarrak first embraced the use of violence. Because many of its militants came out of villages in the rural interior, Iparretarrak was able to focus on the issues of importance to the rural community in ways that Enbata could not. Even among those who disagreed with them, they were seen as "children of the village" and hence not generally subject to public criticism. The greatest contribution of IK's violence and political beliefs was in its ability to mobilize a new generation of apolitical Basque youth, more given to alternative music and fanzines than to the stuff of political struggle. IK represented a growing belief across abertzale generations that the government was stonewalling legitimate cultural demands and thus left the Basque movement no recourse by violence to try to change public policy.

While increasing the political consciousness of Basque youth, the rise of Iparretarrak had other less positive consequences as well. For, at the same time, it served as another example for the conservative Basque electorate as a whole, and to the French State, of the fundamental radicalism of the idea of Basque nationalism in France. Thus, while the rise of Basque violence served to mobilize young and more radical Basque youths, it also served to further alienate others in the Basque electorate who had been unwilling to embrace much tamer examples of Basque nationalist thought in the previous two generations. Yet, it should be noted that IK's violence coexisted with the slowly rising upward trend in votes for abertzale candidates during the 1980's, and this was especially noticeable in selected rural cantons in Basse-Navarre. By 1988, that figure had risen to nine percent in the Pays Basque, and approached twenty- percent in some cantons. While it would be wrong to claim the strength of abertzale voting approached that in Spain, it is significant to note that the abertzale vote has remained relatively stable over a decade at a level approaching ten percent of the French Basque electorate. It is here that IK's embrace of violence appears to be an obstacle to the broader spread of abertzale consciousness. The key to increasing that support is not to engage in a cycle of ethnic 'outbidding', but to demonstrate the ability of

12. See *Hills of Conflict*, chs. Five, Six and Seven.

Basque candidates to speak to the bread and butter issues of greatest concern to Basque voters including economic development in the interior and on the coast.

THE BASQUE TRADITION OF "TRIBAL STRUGGLE"

Looking back from this vantage point at the fin de siecle, the era of the 1970's seems to have left two legacies for the abertzale camp: ideological radicalism (including the armed struggle) and internecine conflict. The irony is that each served to deprive the French Basque movement of unity at a time when it needed it most. They stigmatized the abertzale cause and held back its growth potential among the French Basque electorate. Even in times of rural depopulation and economic decline when one would expect the greatest willingness to embrace new political ideas, the Basque electorate continued to view the idea of Basque nationalism with skepticism and uncertainty. One of the greatest doctrinal errors of the Basque movement in the 1970's was to answer marginal public support by espousing doctrines that were even *more* radically Marxist, or violent, or both.

Reflected in Goyheneche's image of "tribal struggle" is the reality that each new movement since the time of Enbata has sought to define itself not only in terms of its broader goals, but also in contrast to their predecessors who had gone before. Many of the broadsides launched within the abertzale movement seem evidently Freudian in nature–as new groups sought to assert their own power by discrediting "the father" and rewriting their history. In the spirit of the political aphorism that asserts that "all politics are local," it was clear that the abertzale community in France often wasted its time in mystifying internal conflicts that detracted from their efforts to win wider public support. These conflicts were based on an amalgam of issues, generally interwoven in changing combinations: end goals, group politics, tactics (and the use of violence in particular), intergenerational conflict, as well as ongoing interpersonal disputes. Enbata was more able to resist the temptation of fratricide than were its successors due to the presence of founders like Michel Burucoa and Abbe Pierre Larzabal who provided a direct link from Enbata to Abbe Lafitte's Aintzina and his cultural work in the 1950's. Neither EHAS nor IK were similarly constrained, and rejected outright the contributions of the groups that had preceded them.

By the mid-1980's the presence of these two obstacles –internecine strife and the role of violence in discrediting the Basque cause– characterized an abertzale camp in the process of self-marginalization. The extent of the movement's self-defeating fratricide was made apparent at the Aberri Eguna at Hendaye in 1990 when radical Basque youth disrupted the celebration by jeering at abertzale speakers of other generations and political camps. This seemed to the ultimate fruit of the internal conflicts that had marked French Basque politics since Enbata's creation more than twenty-five years before. This disturbing scene demonstrated in stark terms that without coming together in common cause, the Basque movement could not present a credible platform to the Basque public or the State. Given the state's reaction to Iparretarrak's violence, the rise of a moderate Basque center was seen as a necessary alternative to the more radical camp if Basque politics were to remain credible in France.

THE RISE OF THE POLITICAL CENTER

The ascendancy of IK and the decline of EHAS left a void in the Basque political spectrum in the early 1980's and left many abertzale without a vehicle for their militancy. One result led to the creation of sections of two Spanish Basque political parties in France, the PNV and Eusko Alkartasuna (EA). At the same time, diverse voices were calling for the

creation of a moderate Basque political movement that would join diverse militants together in common cause. This effort led to the creation of Euskal Batasuna (EB) by Enbata's Jacques Abeberry and others interested in building a moderate agenda for achievable change. These voices of Basque moderation began to flesh out a number of goals that represented a clear step away from much of the ideological cant that had preceded them.

Implicit in their effort was the creation of a Basque movement capable of uniting militants across the ideological spectrum. However, it was clear from the outset that sharp and irresolvable differences remained over the use of violence, and that it continued to constitute a serious obstacle to political unification within the abertzale camp. The only way that this unification had any chance to succeed was by deliberately leaving the issue of violence aside as a matter of individual conscience. By excising the issue of violence from their agenda, these militants were able to focus on a series of issues of broader interest like the creation of a Basque department, and other goals within a broader agenda for change. The result was the creation of Abertzaleen Batasuna ("Patriotic Unity") uniting militants across ideologies and generations. Among the parties joining in this umbrella grouping were Euskal Batasuna (EB), Eusko Alkartasuna (EA), PNV, EMA and HA[13]. The irony of this new "catch all" political movement was that EB had intended *itself* to be that unifying force only a few years before. Since it is clear that partisan labels become personalized in the abertzale camp, few militants were willing to join a rival's party label for fear of loss of face. In this way, Basque politics has often seemed to be a game of political musical chairs in which partisan labels are created and shed in response to the needs of the moment.

The creation of AB thus provided a neutral meeting ground for militants from across the political spectrum who shared the goal of advancing Basque interests writ large. The willingness to set aside their differences and to speak with a stronger institutional voice was a sign of the maturation of the Basque movement in France. As Richard Irazusta noted, the collective decision to run a unified abertzale list in the 1988 elections was based on, "… a strategic and mathematical analysis"[14]. By joining efforts, the abertzale camp was able to more than *double* the abertzale vote between 1968 and 1988. This plateau was further confirmed by the results of the elections of 1998 which recorded a pro-abertzale vote of 9.35% in the cantonal elections and 8.40% in the regionals. By 1988, it was clear that there was a bedrock of abertzale electoral support approaching ten percent for the entirety of the French Pays Basque, and greater still in select cantons in the interior. These electoral results reflect the dissatisfaction of Basque voters with the policies of the traditional French left and right, and their growing willingness to seek new solutions to their problems from a more responsible abertzale camp. The electoral results confirmed the wisdom of Basque moderates who recognized that successful politics is the art of the *possible*.

THE PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE STATE

One of the most important factors affecting the future of Basque nationalism continues to be the attitude of the French government toward the political and cultural grievances of its regional minority groups. Viewed over the long term, French government policy toward its indigenous minority groups has ranged between indifference and active repression in the two centuries since the French Revolution. These temptations have been the polar stars of

13. "L'appel des formations politiques abertzale," *Enbata*, no. 1576 (6 mai 1999), p. 5.

14. See his Tribune Libre column, "Batasuna Europan," *Enbata*, no. 1571 (avril 1999), p. 8.

administrations of both left and right in the Fifth Republic. In its Jacobin logic, the State has been unwilling to legitimate ethnic demands by recognizing they reflect a "Basque" problem or a "Corsican" one. In this way, former President Valery Giscard d'Estaing could claim that, " Contrary to what one often says and writes, there is not a Corsican problem, there are problems in Corsica."[15].

The predominant arena of government interaction with its regional minorities has passed from the political arena into the "iron cage" of the bureaucracy. The unwillingness of the French government bureaucracy to engage in meaningful dialogue even on educational and linguistic issues seems to define the nature of a "passive aggressive" state and its policy. The French Ministry of National Education has been the State's most visible agent in cultural matters. The pattern of its behavior has been repeated through much of the Fifth Republic: delaying meeting with Basque cultural associations, and then engaging in endless and inconclusive discussions that *might* one day result in token levels of financial support.

There are two plausible explanations for the passive indifference or resistance of the government to minority demands. First, they may well reflect a genuine uncertainty about the appropriate political response to minority demands, given concern over the consequence of any government action. One clear example was Mitterrand's reversal of his electoral promises to the Basques following his election as president in 1981. Using promises of a Basque department in order to attempt to make inroads in the traditionally Gaullist Basque electorate, Mitterrand then retreated from his promise once elected out of concern that it provoke separatist demands threatening the French national interest. Yet, in other cases, the French government has demonstrated its ability to act quickly when it was politically expedient. This was the case in the decision to divide Corsica –already an administrative region– into *two* departments as a spur for economic development. What underlay the government's decision was its calculation that by making political and administrative concessions, it might undercut the several Corsican nationalist movements, and end the long history of violence on the island.

In the case of the Pays Basque, the government has been historically unwilling to make similar changes because of the presence of ETA's leadership structure in France, and the ongoing fear of provoking a serious separatist sentiment there. It is clear that the constancy of government policy toward the Basques demonstrates its commitment to a policy of "no negotiation and no concessions." The fact that the government occasionally grants meetings to Basque cultural groups suggests a kind of passive-aggressive psychological warfare. The government has demonstrated repeatedly through its deeds that it is curiously willing to discredit the most moderate elements of the Basque movement who have acted openly and in good faith in an attempt to safeguard their culture and language. In matters of national education, the French State controls the agenda concerning the Ikastolas and the teaching of Basque. As a result, Basque associations have few tools other than pleas of fairness and decency in asking for government support. In truth, though, he greatest handicap Basque cultural associations have had is the lack of more vocal support by either the Basque electorate or elected officials that would give their appeals more force.

The French government's minority policy is reminiscent of Daniel Patrick Moynihan's coinage of the term 'benign neglect' to describe government minority policy in the United States in the 1960's. Since the time of the French Third Republic, it has been clear that the "syndrome of modernization" has posed an increasing threat of economic and cultural

15. Cited in *Le Monde,* 11-12 juin, 1996, p. 6.

assimilation among France's peripheral minority language groups. With the force of history apparently on its side, the government could simply wait as the inexorable tides of demographic change reduced the size and strength of minority populations[16]. If it could claim credit for economic development strategies that happened to hasten that process, all the better. One example is the recent announcement of the projected path of a new interstate freight highway linking France with Spain and crossing the Pyrenees inland from the coast through the heart of Basse-Navarre[17]. The two most likely proposed routes for the autoroute are through either St. Etienne de Baigorry or scenic St. Jean Pied de Port. Many view the building of this road as a calamity for Basque culture in France. The survival of the rural beauty of Basse-Navarre will be traded for a handful of jobs in interstate gas stations and discount motels. So goes the process of modernization. As Albert Dauzat explained it earlier in the twentieth century: "Le francais rapporte. Le patois ne rapporte rien." (French earns money. Patois earns nothing).

While the primary focus of Basque approaches to the French government has involved appeals to the French ministry of national education to support the Basque language Ikastola charter school system, other political and economic issues have been ongoing as well. Many of these issues have been assembled in a document, "Schema d'Amenagement du Pays Basque," first published in 1996. Among its elements were the call for the creation of a Basque department, the creation of a comprehensive strategy for economic development of the region, both urban and rural, and the creation of a "Conseil de la Langue Basque" to enhance the preservation of Basque language and culture[18].

The demand for the creation of a separate Basque department is the most visible of contemporary demands by the Basque moderate center, and one that has the longest historical pedigree as well. This demand calls for the creation of a separate Basque department from within the territory of the existing Department of the Pyrenees-Atlantiques, itself a creation of the Revolutionary Assembly (as the Department of the Basses-Pyrenees) with its prefecture in Pau. This is one of the oldest of Basque political goals in France, one that surfaced for the first time during the Revolution, and again at the end of World War II, before being picked up again by Enbata in the 1960's. The creation of a separate department is widely believed to be key to Basque political, economic and cultural needs, even if it tacitly accepts the reality of French sovereignty over the Pays Basque.

The departmental administration of France falls within the purview of the French Ministry of the Interior that is charged not only with the territorial administration of France but also the maintenance of law and order. Despite Jacobin resistance, the creation of new departments is not without historical precedents in France. In addition to the division of Corsica into two departments mentioned above, the government sought to improve the administration of the burgeoning Parisian region by creating a ring of new departments around the capital. In the case of the Basques, however, it was clear that the contiguity of the Spanish Basque conflict, and ETA's presence in France, made the government consistently unwilling to entertain this possibility. The problem for the government is that this idea has now entered the Basque political mainstream and has achieved growing support not only by the Basque movement,

16. See the magisterial treatment of the French Third Republic by Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen; The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, Stanford, University: Stanford University Press, 1976

17. "Ces projets autoroutiers qui balafrent la Basse-Navarre," *Enbata*, no. 1579 (27 mai 1999), pp. 4-5.

18. "Gestation difficile du Conseil de la langue Basque," *Enbata*, no. 1571 (1 avril 1999), pp. 4-5.

but by economic development specialists as well as a growing number of Basque elected officials and voters.

By March, 1999, seventy municipal councils out of one hundred and fifty eight had voted in favor of a Basque department compared to only eleven that had opposed it[19]. Even as longstanding an opponent of a department (and the abertzale movement) as the longtime deputy from the Basque interior, Michel Inchauspe, sponsored legislation in the French National Assembly to permit the creation of new departments[20]. One of the greatest arguments for the creation of a new administrative department for the Pays Basque concerned its relative economic marginality compared to its more prosperous neighbors, Bearn, in the Pyrenees-Atlantiques. In January, 1999, the regional newspaper, *Sud Ouest*, published a list of the ten richest and the ten poorest communes in the Department of the Pyrenees-Atlantiques. It revealed that all of the ten *richest* communes were in Bearn and that all ten of the *poorest* communes were in the Pays Basque[21]. This has led to growing support for the belief that only a separate Basque department can reverse the economic problems in the region.

The question that remains open is whether this growing public support will be sufficient to cause the government to reconsider its steadfast refusal to consider administrative changes in the Pays Basque. It should be understood that French policy concerning the integrity of French territory and culture –and its steadfast opposition to separatist movements– lies at the very heart of the Jacobin civic religion, and has informed French views on Basque nationalism since the Spanish Civil War. Regardless of the ideological motivations, government reaction to Basque political demands has been virtually the same from left to right under the Fifth Republic. What seemed like an attractive platform plank later appeared altogether different in the election's aftermath faced with the sobering challenge of governing. In 1999, French Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement reported that Premier Lionel Jospin had rejected the idea of a Basque department in, "…a clear and thus definitive fashion"[22]. It is significant to note that Chevenement justified the government's stand by stating that the division of existing states along ethnic lines risked "Balkanizing" all of Europe.

Perhaps the height of the government's defensive denial came in the aftermath of World War One when Henri de Jouvenal, French delegate at Versailles, defined French reaction to the minorities treaty being drafted as part of the dismantlement of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. According to de Jouvenal, France refused to vote on the minorities treaty at Versailles, claiming that France, itself, had no minorities[23]. This is central to what Charles De Gaulle once referred to as a "certain idea of France." But it left the government in evident denial, and reminiscent of the verse of Hughes Mearns who once wrote, " As I was going up the stair, I met a man who wasn't there. He wasn't there again today. I wish, I wish, he'd stay away."

What emerges from French government policy is scant meaningful support for the teaching of the Basque language, and a focus on expanding the infrastructure of tourism

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19. "Un sondage grandeur nature," *Enbata*, no. 1568 (11 mars 1999), p.5.

20. "L'amendement Michel Inchauspe," *Enbata*, no. 1562 (28 janvier 1999), p. 4.

21. "Le Fracture Bearn/Pays Basque," *Enbata*, no. 1562 (28 janvier 1999), p. 4.

22. "Chevenement est le Milosevic francais de l'An 2000," *Enbata*, no. 1568 (11 mars 1999), pp. 4-5.

23. Cited in the Minutes of the Sixth Committee (Political Questions) (Fourth Meeting), Records of the Sixth Assembly, Special Supplement no. 39, *Official Journal*, Geneva: League of Nations, 1925, p. 17.

(gites ruraux, etc.) as the motor of the economy in the Pays Basque. In this way, we witness the growing commodization of culture, in much the same way it has afflicted Indian reservations in the United States. In France, ethnic cultural traditions are thus reduced to performance art, and become faltering motors for seasonal regional economies.

THE IMPACT OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BETWEEN ETA AND THE SPANISH STATE

One of the greatest influences on Basque nationalism in France remains the uncertain future of the Basque struggle in Spain. Few issues are more important today for abertzale on either side of the border than is the "on again off again" nature of negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government[24]. What we are witnessing in the Spanish Base case is an example of two adversaries who are looking for a face-saving way out of a conflict that neither can win. The result has been a history of "non-negotiations" involving Spanish officials and former ETA leaders brought back from exile. Negotiated settlements are fragile arrangements, and if successful involve a series of gestures by each side designed to signal sincerity and good faith. Thus, in September 1998, ETA announced an "unlimited cease-fire" in its conflict with Spain[25]. ETA's announcement followed closely on an historic meeting with twenty-three other nationalist groups that led to the 'Lizarra Declaration" calling for unconditional, multilateral cease talks and later the cessation of violence[26]. While it was first dismissed as a trick[27], it was also clear that neither side could afford to be blamed for a missed opportunity. In November, Spanish Prime Minister Aznar announced that he had approved talks with ETA[28], but continued to insist that independence for the Basques was "not negotiable"[29]. In its communique, ETA made mention of the Northern Irish peace talks, and indeed much as been written about ETA's interest in learning how the IRA succeeded in bringing as avowed an enemy as the British government to the bargaining table[30]. At this point, each side began a series of reciprocal gestures intended to move the peace process along. In May, 1999, the process of political reconciliation extended to Basque partisan politics in Spain with the creation of a Basque "Nationalist Front" that reflected ETA's decision to support the existing moderate government of the PNV and EA, an agreement quickly labeled "dangerous" and "a catastrophe" by Madrid[31]. By summer, 1999, Spain had released some ETA prisoners and transferred others to jails nearer the Basque provinces fulfilling one of ETA's longest-standing demands. While moving to close the newspaper *Egin*

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24. See James E. Jacob et Jean-Claude Larronde, "Violence et Moderation," in Denis Laborde, *La Question Basque*, Paris: L'Harmottan, 1999.

25. "L'ETA annonce un cessez-le-feu illimite," *Yahoo Actualites* International, 17 septembre 1998.

26. Justin Webster, "Madrid warns of trap over Eta ceasefire," *London Sunday Times*, September 17, 1998.

27. Matt Spetalnick, "Sapin's Premier Casts Doubt on ETA Truce," *Yahoo News* World Headlines, September 17, 1998.

28. Johanna Tuckman (A.P.), "Spain Approves Talks With Militants," *Newsday*, November 3, 1998.

29. "Spain rules out discussing Basque independence," (A.P. wire story) *Nandotimes,* November 10, 1998.

30. See Ciaran Giles, "Sinn Fein Discusses Basque Conflict," *Newsday*, October 5, 1998.

31. "un pacte entre moderes et radicaux place le Pays Basque espagnol sous tutelle nationaliste," *Le Monde, 19 aout, 1999.*

as part of ETA's financial network[32], in July, 1999, Aznar hailed the high court decision to release twenty-three imprisoned Herri Batasuna leaders as a positive development in the peace process[33]. As of August, 1999, Spain and ETA had only met *once*, in Switzerland in May. At that time, ETA asked whether Spain would grant the Basques the right of self-determination, and the government representatives stated they would never accept the dismantlement of Spain or the right of the Basques alone to decide it[34]. Given the sensitivity of these negotiations, it is unlikely more will occur before the next Spanish elections that will take place in the spring of 2000.

France has clearly supported Spain in its struggle with ETA since the conclusion of GAL's campaign on French territory in the mid-1980's. At that time, French policy regarding asylum for ETA refugees changed in the face of violence carried out by GAL mercenaries hired by the Spanish government. This marks fifteen years in which French authorities have worked closely with Spain in apprehending ETA fugitives, and the twentieth anniversary of the French decision to no longer give "political refugee" status to Basques[35]. France has used the timing of its arrests to send clear signals of its support for the Spanish government. The day of Jose Maria Aznar's swearing in as Spanish premier, France expelled one of ETA's former leaders, Josu Ternera, to Spain. Then, in March, 1999, French police arrested the head of ETA's military wing on the first day of Aznar's official visit to Paris[36]. It is clear that there is little the Basques can do to break this pact between Paris and Madrid. As a result, the unfolding of the peace process offers the greatest hope for a peaceful solution to the Basque struggle in Spain, and for an expansion of cultural and economic contacts between Basques on both sides of the border. Peace between Spain and ETA will lessen the political tensions surrounding Basque politics in France, and may well give the French government the political cover it needs to engage in the kind of cultural reforms that it has heretofore been reluctant to make.

THE RESURGENCE OF NATIONALISM IN EUROPE

One of the greatest spectacles in recent European history has been the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Czechoslavakia, and Yugoslavia, the three greatest examples in Eastern Europe of states without a strong and unified national identity[37]. The result has been the clear resurgence of nationalism as a force in European politics. This has influenced the emergent foreign policy of the European Union and been a worrisome development for governments

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32. "La justice fait fermer le quotidien independantiste basque Egin," (A.F.P.) *Yahoo Actualites* International, 15 juillet 1998.

33. See Jo Tuckman, "Basque Separatists Mark Release," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1998; and "Spain moves to forge Basque peace with separatists' release," *Yahoo News* World, July 28, 1999.

34. Craig R. Whitney, "Basque Separatists Trade in Weapons for Words," *The New York Times*, August 15, 1999, p. A3.

35. "La lutte contre ETA: 15 annees d'une etroite cooperation franco-espagnole," (A.F.P.) *Yahoo Actualites* Politiques, 17 septembre 1998.

36. See "Police Arrest Senior Basque Leader," *Newsday.com*, March 9, 1999; "ETA arrests in Paris, " *BBC News Online,* March 9, 1999; and "French Police Arrest Basque Leader in Paris, " *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 1999, p. A14.

37. See Roger Cohen, "Yugoslavia's Ethnic conflict Threatens Europe's Stability," *The New York Times*, November 26, 1994, pp. A1;A4.

like the French or Spanish that fear the precedent the international community has set in recognizing the dismemberment of other European states.

This was particularly true in 1991 when Germany essentially forced the European Union's hand in unilaterally recognizing the independence of Croatia and Slovenia from the unraveling Yugoslavia. Faced with this fait accompli, France joined the rest of the E.U. in reluctantly following Germany's lead, but it was clear that France feared the consequences of having opened this pandora's box of national self-determination. Then French Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, voiced the fear that, "tomorrow what we have done for Yugoslavia would be applied to other cases"[38].

CONCLUSION

Such is the state of Basque nationalism on the eve of the new millennium. The coming of the millennium is at best a symbolic threshold in the history of the French Basques. Many of the issues extant in the Pays Basque today are the result of ongoing dialogues stretching back to the early 1960's, and, in the case of a Basque department, to the time of the French Revolution. One of the common challenges of each Basque movement since Aintzina in the 1930's has been the suspicion of the conservative and clerical Basque electorate whose political culture has changed only gradually over the past half century. The suspicion of the Basque public has combined with the indifference or hostility of the French state to stigmatize the idea of Basque nationalism and even its most moderate goals. The persistence of a Basque political consciousness in France has been a testimony to the devotion of five diverse generations of militants who have nurtured it since the 1930's[39]. For the fidelity of these Basque patriots has been one of the sustaining strengths of Basque identity in France. The transmission of abertzale political values across generations has insured the birth and renewal of the idea of Basque nationalism in an inclement environment.

Over the last thirty years the electoral support of abertzale candidates has more than doubled. Though having reached a steady plateau of approximately nine percent, this figure represents the cumulative effort of thirty years of trying to establish abertzalisme as a legitimate political voice among the Basque people. If there is another factor that explains the rise in support of abertalisme in the Pays Basque, it is surely the failure of the traditional French political system to make good on its promises to the Basques. What successive governments of right and left have done has been minimal if not illusory. Moments of clear institutional hostility have been interspersed in recent times by a institutional indifference that seems "passive aggressive" in its refusal to support even educational and cultural requests emanating from Basque moderates. As we noted above, the French state nurtures in its collective embodiment the victorious Jacobin ideology of the Revolution which has remained the civic religion of the state. Since the time of the Third Republic, the state has encouraged the syndrome of modernization, and been the agent of social and cultural assimilation in the effort to create a unified French nation. This process of assimilation has come at the expense of rural France, and of ethnic France in particular. Indeed, the issues facing the Basques are

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38. Cited in Alan Riding, "Separatists in Europe Indirectly Reinforce Unity in Yugoslavia," *The New York Times,* September 7, 1991, p. A4.

39. As an example of the delineation of those five generations of militants: (1) Chanoine Pierre Lafitte's Aintzina; 2)Marc Legasse/Pierre Larzabal/Eugène Goyheneche (Aintzina, Hordago (Legasse)); 3) Abeberry/Haran/Davant/Charitton, etc. (Enbata, Eusko Alkartasuna, E.B., etc. 4) Irazusta and his generation (EMA/IK); and 5) Txetx, contemporary radical youth groups and Basque alternative music,etc.

similar to those that have touched Brittany, Corsica or Occitanie. All have faced the institutional willfulness of the French State, and the homogenizing logic of its public policy.

One of the greatest signs of encouragement in the evolution of abertzale activity in France has been the ability of successive generations of militants to develop their beliefs and frame them in response to the changing political context of France. Thus, Pierre Lafitte's clerical regionalism was as natural a reflection of its time as was the secular nationalism, federalism and internal colonialist theses of Enbata in the 1960's in the midst of France's crisis of decolonization. Later, the rise of the armed struggle and indigenous political violence in France embodied the power of the ***idea*** of wars of national liberation that were changing the history and cartography of the globe. As an abrupt shift in the course of Basque nationalism in France, the rise of the armed struggle represented the choice of action over reflection. It was part of the natural desire of younger militants who sought to write their own histories, defining themselves as subjects, rather than as passive objects to be manipulated by the hands of a distant state. Here, as in Spain, the rise of Basque violence was a response that reflected the level of frustration engendered by the indifference or hostility of the French and Spanish states.

The rise of French Basque violence has proven to be a double-edged sword. At the same time it has provoked a level of government repression heretofore unknown in the Pays Basque, it has also been an undeniable factor in the rise to political awareness of a new generation of Basque youth, steeped in the culture of alternative music and seeking a new voice to give substance to their values and view of the future[40].

IK's violence ultimately proved to be a way station on the way to Basque political moderation. Indeed, one of the greatest legacies of IK's violence was to provoke the most profound reflection on the part of older militants whose own militancy had kept the abertzale movement splintered (and hence weak). This was what Eugen Goyheneche called the Basque movement's tragic 'tradition of tribal struggle.' As a response, there emerged a new commitment to political moderation that has largely defined abertzale politics in France in the past two decades. The result of this political moderation is that the movement has focused on unity rather than on fragmentation. In so doing, they have established themselves as a legitimate and credible political voice among the Basque public. In contrast to the ideological impasses of the past, this moderation reflects the maturation of Basque nationalism in France. What has emerged from this latest chapter in abertzale action is a rational understanding that even in Basque politics, politics is the art of the possible. This appears to be one of the greatest fruits of contemporary Basque nationalism–in France as well as in Spain. The rise of consolidation of Basque moderation means that the Basque people will enter the new millennium looking to the future and not to the past. Yet, the coming of the millennium also reminds us that history flows ever onward. As the Afghan proverb notes, "The opportunity is dear and time is a sword." For the Basques, as Lewis Carroll suggested, "The time has come… to speak of many things"[41].

Without concerted and united action to force government cooperation, there will come a time in the next century when the Basque-speaking population of France will fall below the level of sustainability. Every indication now points to the fact that this is the outcome the French government seeks. If Basque culture is to be saved, it may well depend on two

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40. See Stephane Davet, "Le chant d'amour de la jeunesse basque pour son identite culturelle," *Le Monde*, 10 aout 1999.

41. From Lewis Carroll's poem, "The Walrus and the Carpenter."

elements not under control of the French state: the future of minority policy in the European Union, and the cultural and economic spillover of peace and prosperity in the more dynamic Spanish Basque region. One great imponderable is the role of the European Union whose commitment to human rights and minority rights may well force the hand of indifferent national administrations. This may be reinforced by the growth of regional markets in the European Union that may increase the ties between the Basque regions of France and Spain as the significance of national borders erodes in the next century. The French Pays Basque is far closer to the urban centers of San Sebastian and Bilbao than it is to its own regional capital, Bordeaux, to the north. As the hope of a negotiated settlement with ETA has led to a renewed process of political reconciliation among Basque political parties, it appears that the Basque region of Spain can turn its attention away from violence and toward rebuilding what was once an economy that was the envy of Spain. With the industrialized south as an engine, there are clear economic and cultural benefits for the French Basques from closer association with their ethnic kin in a united Europe. Europe may be the ferry to the future, but Basques must navigate the shallows of policy and ideology that still guide the governments of France and Spain.

The key to the future of Basque culture is, in the final analysis, in the hands of the Basque people, themselves. When reduced to its sociological essence, the survival of Basque culture in the new millennium will reflect the aggregated individual judgements of Basque youth and young married couples who now stand at a crossroads in their own identities and in the history of the Basque people. The future of Basque culture will be insured by the deliberate action of Basques today or it will slowly descend into folklore, a nostalgic and marketable artifact of another time. If there is any legitimate future role for Basque nationalism in the new millennium, it should be in creating a forward-looking agenda of economic development and cultural preservation that will insure the survival of Basques and Basque culture. If they fail, it is clear that one day in the not too distant future, it will be said that the Pays Basque is no longer the home of the Basques, but of the descendants of Basques.