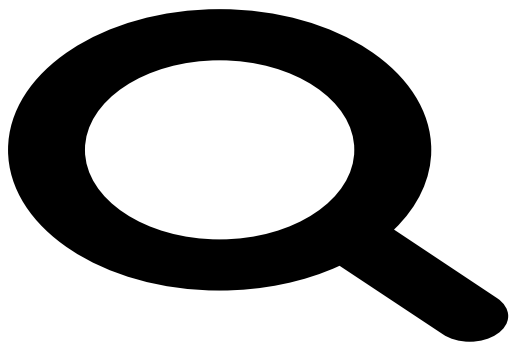


21 - O IDEAS FOR EUSKADI: TOWARDS A CHARTER OF BASQUE CITIZENSHIP

Posted on 10/10/2012 by Naider



The Statute of Gernika and the Spanish Constitution are, today, the basic rules that sustain the political reality of the Basque Country. They define their powers, their organization model, their bodies of democratic representation and government, their borders and their symbols. All of this is of the utmost importance, without a doubt, for the construction of a country that, at the time of its writing (late 1970s), was suffering from a structural crisis of an economic, social, urban-environmental and, especially, political nature of enormous

gravity. The signing and democratic ratification of the agreement for self-government (and the associated economic-fiscal agreement) of this part of Basque society was a political achievement without parallel in the history of Euskal Herria. The recovery of its fiscal autonomy is a vital instrument for investment in the country. The return of their political autonomy, a recognition of the democratically expressed collective will.

That economic and political self-government has been, in historical and comparative terms, well managed over the years. Important infrastructures have been built, a public educational system, a great university for all, an efficient administration and universal and competitive healthcare. Light years have been advanced in the urban dignity of our towns and cities. The environmental disaster that our territory suffered after decades of unbridled industrialization has been recovered. And, furthermore, the successive administrators have been able to accompany civil society in some of their business, cultural and creative adventures.

But in addition to an economic-fiscal concert and some representative institutions from which an administration with a multitude of exclusive management powers emanates, the permanent evolution of a society requires establishing and universalizing within it a series of principles, rights and citizen values of those that neither the Statute nor the Constitution say anything.

And it is here where in the Basque Country so much remains to be done. Euskadi is a mixed-race society, with diverse cultural backgrounds. A society that has barely spent a few decades finding its own process of democratization. A society where freedom and equality are not yet included in any shared coexistence document. A place where the democratic virtues of solidarity and justice are not carved into any frontispiece of our common imagination.

Now that it seems that we are finally beginning to leave behind the long shadow of Francoism and its associated ETA fanaticism; now that religion deals only with the soul of those who want to be saved; now that the military is beginning to disguise itself as NGOs; now that the administration persecutes the exploiters; now that justice begins to leave its palaces; now that tolerance dares to rear its head; Now is the **moment to build an ethical homeland for the Basques**. A homeland based on a **Charter of Citizenship** that includes the fundamental principles on which our society is built, that guarantees the rights of truly free citizens, that builds the Basque Country on the foundations of an equitable system of social cooperation between equals.

This *Citizenship Charter* must be the essence of this new agreement between Basques. Not a concert to establish the economic-fiscal regime nor to delimit new powers of public management. It is a **concert for democratic coexistence** that is the foundation for the construction of the Basque Country for the next 20 years. A *Citizenship Charter* that speaks of the democratic principles on which our shared project, Euskadi, is based: freedom and equality. A *Citizenship Charter* establishing the **consensus on the political, social, civil and economic rights of Basque citizens**: the right to health, education, well-being, housing, full and effective equality for all citizens, among many other aspects. A *Charter of Citizenship* interpreted *on the values of solidarity and justice* that shields the citizen against oppression, exclusion, poverty and ignorance in any circumstance.

It will be on the bases of this civic agreement on which it will be possible to later move towards a

greater or lesser political sovereignty with respect to Spain or Europe. And it is precisely in today's much questioned European Union where perhaps we should dig a little in detail. Along with the overwhelming set of regulations and bureaucratic institutions aimed at building a common market and a single currency, the European Union hides a treasure that can be enormously useful for the Basque Country as a starting point to illuminate the drafting of our *Charter of Citizenship*: the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*. Although somewhat forgotten in offices in Brussels, the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* is a document that contains human rights provisions for all citizens of the Union and is binding on all member states of the Union. the Union (except the United Kingdom and Poland).

Based on this document, the Basque Country can build its own *Citizenship Charter* that is also part of the necessary national conciliation process that is still pending among us after years of terrorist barbarism, fanaticism and democratic deficits of all kinds. that society has stoically endured for so many years.

Once agreed by our political representatives, after a participatory and inclusive process of all sensitivities, the Charter should be endorsed by citizens and once adopted, start a constant process of dissemination, education and universalization of its contents in the cultural heritage of our society. And, surely, this last part will be the most difficult part of all because it will try to change some of the counter-values that are still so widespread in our society.

The next government to come out of the polls and the next Lehendakari to preside over it would have a beautiful project for their country with this instrument. A project whose development will undoubtedly lead us to **freedom and full equality for all of us, Basque citizens**.

There are no comments yet.