

BASQUE MEMORY NEWS

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By AHAZTUAK 1936-1977

July 2010

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The bodies of three victims of fascism recovered

In Basque Country, in the early years of Franco's terror (1936-1945); 6,000 people were killed in extrajudicial killings or shootings after martial courts were held. To date, there are hundreds of bodies still missing in mass graves.

After weeks of work Ahaztuak 1936-1977 members, have located the secret burial place in which the bodies of three victims of fascism were hidden, killed by death squads in 1936. They recovered the bodies of two men and one woman, who were buried in a curve in the road up to the hill of La Tejera (Araba, Basque Country).



Primitivo Fdz.de Labastida

DNA tests may confirm the identity of one of the three bodies recovered, it seems that is Primitivo Fernandez de Labastida. The information provided by the family of this victim of the Franco regime has been key to the investigation. They knew that Primitivo was kidnapped by several requetés (paramilitary traditionalists who supported Franco's side against republican democracy) and he was killed along with a couple, Florentino Garcia and Monica Barron.

Years ago, they found remains of a skull in the area but the presence of animals roaming the pit forced the residents to cover the ground with stones, the place was known locally as (El hoyo de los muertos) "The Pit of the Dead."

Ahaztuak 1936-1977 carried out works on the ground for three weeks until they found remains of a body. The local court was then informed of the findings but as usual in these cases they did not take over the investigation. The state administration should investigate, clarify and restore all these victims. For years, family associations and groups of historical memory have been doing the work that would correspond to justice in a true democratic state.



The exhumation was successfully completed on 20th of June and finally the three bodies were recovered, all had suffered a gunshot to the head.

The work was conducted under a mural with the slogan "They didn't bury bodies, they buried seeds", referring to the republican and anti-fascists ideas that defend the victims, ideas that can not be shot or buried.

Ahaztuak 1936-1977 is already working on a political act of homage to rename "The Pit of the Dead", "The Curve of Freedom."

Basque Country & Ireland: Memory and international solidarity

A few months ago Ahaztuak 1936-1977 held the second edition of the festival-tribute to the Irish men who fought in the legendary XV International Brigade. This event took place at Paddy Shorts Taberna, Gasteiz (Araba, Basque Country). It was attended by members of the group *Friends of Charlie Donnelly*.

BRIGADISTA INTERNAZIONAL IRLANDARRAK GOGOAN
SUAK PIZTURIK DIRAUI!
 II.FESTA-OMENALDIA



OTSAILAK 28, igandea. 18:00etatik aurrera
PADDY SHORTS TABERNAN
 (Santa Lucia 8. Judimendi. GASTEIZ)





BIDE EMANALDIA, OLERKIAK, MUSIKA ZUZENEAN...



2010-02-28: Paddy Shorts Taberna, Gasteiz (Araba, Basque Country)

Recently members of Ahaztuak paid a visit back to Dungannon (Tyrone, Ireland). Accompanied by members of Friends of Charlie Donnelly, they visited the birthplace of this fighter against fascism and also a memorial to him.

The Basque delegation also had the opportunity to see first hand the work being done in the north of the island to keep the memory alive of those members of the International Brigades who fought against Franco.



Dungannon



Derry



Belfast

They have also contacted other groups working to reveal the truth about police repression, the dirty war and state violence that the Irish Republican and nationalist community has suffered in the long years of conflict.

No Justice, no compensation: The State does not recognize its victims



1975-10-1: Dictator Franco with Juan Carlos de Borbón (current king of Spain)

In 1977 Franco's elite with the collusion of sectors of the alleged Spanish left movement, imposed a Law of Punto Final, which ends investigation and prosecution against people in government and authority accused of state violence. No justice, no break with the old regime nor any guarantees of non-repetition of the practices of the dictatorship were given, that's why dozens of deaths happened after 1977 at the hands of the police and death squads. 465 deaths have been recorded in the past 50 years (1960-2010) as a result of state violence in Basque Country.

The Spanish government has recently opened a way to financially compensate the victims of police repression during the dictatorship of 1968-1977. The number of Basque citizens killed between 1968 and 1977 is 86. However, the State is not accepting requests for compensation. Ahaztuak has launched a campaign to denounce the impunity of these crimes and the treatment received by these victims of Franco.



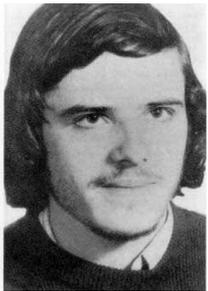
"They also are victims": Ahaztuak 1936-1977 with relatives of murdered

An example of this discrimination is highlighted by this two very symbolic cases:

The first is from 1969, when two Basque citizens were shot dead by police during protests against air pollution in the town of Erandio (Bizkaia, Basque Country). Their names: Anton Fernandez and Josu Murueta. One of them, Anton Fernandez, has been denied the status of victim because according to the Spanish Government at the time when he was shot by police he “was not participating in the demonstration but was watching the events from the balcony of his house as a mere spectator.”



“Anton also is victim”: Homage in Erandio (Bizkaia, Basque Country)



Jon Paredes “Txiki”

The second case is that of Jon Paredes "Txiki", denied both the status of victim of the dictatorship and the status of anti-fascist fighter. Txiki (an ETA member) is one of the last people sentenced to death by Franco's regime and was killed on September 27, 1975.

According to the State his death "is not related to a circumstance of vindication and defence of freedom and democratic rights, but with the execution of a death sentence for a crime of terrorism."



Homage in the cemetery of Zarautz (Gipuzkoa, Basque Country): Police identified the brother of “Txiki” in his grave

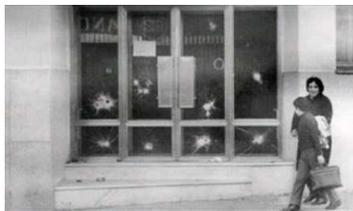
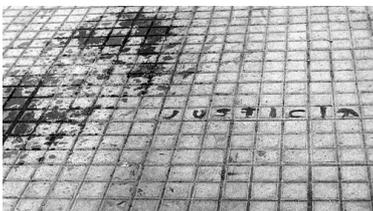
To Ahaztuak 1936-1977 these two cases are a clear example of the impunity of Franco's regime crimes that today remains in force. Ahaztuak will continue to work in defence of the memory of those antifascist and innocent people killed in those dark years.

Reactions to the Bloody Sunday report in Basque Country



The publication of the Saville report has been widely welcomed by the various groups which call for truth and justice for the victims of police repression in Basque Country. The example of public recognition by the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, for the tragic events of 1972 in which 14 people were unjustly killed in Derry (Ireland) has served for several Basque groups to make an appeal to the Spanish government to take similar action:

Martxoak 3 is the association that brings together victims and relatives of the slaughter of March 3, 1976. On this day the Spanish police suppressed a workers meeting that was taking place inside a church in Gasteiz (Araba, Basque Country) killing five workers and wounding more than 100 people. The tragic events were never investigated and have never been officially recognised. For this reason *Martxoak 3* has followed the example Bloody Sunday process to denounce the situation of impunity which continues in this case.



Gasteiz, March 3, 1976

San Fermin 78 Gogoan has also demanded for the Spanish government to follow suit. They ask for a Truth Commission to clarify the brutal police action on July 1978, that took the lives of German Rodriguez in Iruñea-Pamplona (Nafarroa, Basque Country) and Joseba Barandiaran in Donostia (Gipuzkoa, Basque Country).



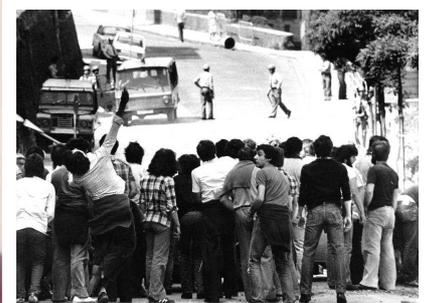
Germán Rodríguez



Iruñea: July 8, 1978



Joseba Barandiaran



Donostia: July 11, 1978