

Aurkezpena

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José Antonio de Aguirre earned a prominent place for himself in the history of our country. This well deserved distinction lies not only in his political contributions, but also for having taken on the enormous responsibility that came with being Lehendakari in difficult times shrouded by war and exile. He holds a special place in our memory for his open disposition, his flexibility, his humanity and his sociability. We cannot talk about our recent history without talking about Aguirre. It is essential to read his books and writings in order to understand the terrible events that took place in our country only a few short decades ago.

Like many others, he was a man ahead of his time, a person who knew how to look beyond the horizon of his own lifetime.

Although better known for his political facet, Lehendakari Aguirre's life was infinitely richer and more noteworthy. He was deeply concerned with education, knowing only too well that an uneducated nation steeped in ignorance would be condemned to



Opening letter

Lehendakaria

corporate operations. Aguirre's vision of society and economic solidarity, of the relationship between capitalism and the workforce, has left an important mark on Basque nationalism, a point of reference which should be neither forgotten nor ignored.

Aguirre's life was full of trials and tribulations. There is probably nothing worse for a politician committed to his people and nation than to feel helpless as fascism and intolerance forced himself and thousands of his fellow Basques far from their country, their and hopes and ambitions. Forced exile has a dramatic effect on a nation. This is the drama that Aguirre

experienced as yet another Basque, yet another supporter of the Spanish Republic forced to leave his home to take refuge in a foreign land. It couldn't hurt to recall that as Mayor of Getxo, Aguirre was one of the presidents of *Corporación Municipal*, which proclaimed the Republic in Euskadi. I often ask myself what our country and society would have been like if the Franco dictatorship hadn't destroyed freedom?

Aguirre, our first Lehendakari

disappear. He was an untiring athlete, an extraordinary husband and father, and was fully committed to society. Politically he was committed as a nationalist and a politician; personally, as a man and businessman. It may seem trivial but the fact that he was a company executive who proposed distributing profits among workers was quite revolutionary. Even today it may very well behoove us to rethink this perspective on business and