

# A Word With You

**"EMAK bakia"** is an old Basque expression which means "Don't bother me."

The Basque language has been traced back to prehistoric times, to that remote era tens of thousands of years ago when the cave man inhabited the Basque country around the Pyrenees.

With such a genealogy, "emak bakia" can make a bid to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest spoken sentiment of mankind!

All primordial things have a potential for good and for ill, and so it is with "emak bakia."

Where there is a prospective interference in one's private affairs, or an aggression on one's personal rights, "Don't bother me" is a fitting and proper reaction. But where there is a growing problem affecting one's community, where one may see might trampling on right, then "Don't bother me" is dangerous nonsense.

Too often, men's reactions have been the reverse of what they ought to be. How many tyrants have tramped through Dordogne in thirty thousand years? Yet how many Cro-Magnons or their descendants have stood up to them with a loud and clear "Emak bakia"? Unfortunately, in the Basque country—and everywhere else from Bangkok to Brooklyn—it has too often been the rule that men have allowed predators to bother them.

And too often have men said "Don't bother me" when they should care. Too often is this the response to an

opportunity to remedy an injustice.

Oh, what a creature is man! Some day I'd like to do an Essay on Man that should out-Pope Pope. (Alexander, that is. Alexander Pope, I mean, not Pope Alexander.)

In this essay we would have to take note of man's bizarre inconsistencies. He stands against the weak and yields to the strong, but gives moral preachments to the opposite effect. He craves the affection of his neighbors, yet schemes of ways to do them in. He is mostly lazy, cowardly and stupid, but paints himself as diligent, courageous and intelligent. Those few who really are, he crucifies, then deifies. He makes sermons on love and consideration, but lives out his life in a narcissistic semi-coma. Buffeted by emotion, he prates of reason. Weighed down by inertia, he is ever restless and unsatisfied. Dominated by trivialities, he pretends to be governed by great principles. He knows that his only salvation is in harmony with the rest of mankind, yet his chief delight and occupation, his crowning glory is to make enemies, to intrigue against them, to abuse and exploit them, to slaughter them. He makes war and cries peace.

He is, in short, an astounding chemical compound, an unbelievable bag of tricks, and he's all we have and all we are—so the essay will undoubtedly conclude on a cautiously optimistic note.

What essay? *Emak bakia!*

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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