

3.2 Humanity without God (Considerations on war)

For Arizmendiarieta, without God, no social life is possible. Without God, “mankind would cease to exist, and mankind must cease to exist if the hand of God does not sustain it, does not care for it.” (Ib.) Without God, there is no norm, no connection of consciousness that makes it possible to provide a foundation for social life. There is no more than chaos, to which mankind, over the long term, will succumb irredeemably.

Many peoples and the immense majority of people live today as if God had not incarnated, “as if Christ had not established the only foundations of social co-existence.” (PR, I, 102) They have followed the slogan the Heine, “the impious”: “let us leave the sky for the sparrows and the angels; we want champagne, roses, and the dancing of smiling nymphs.” With the help of technology, modern man wanted to transform the land into a paradise, in which he would be self-sufficient, without God. God has been dethroned, man has been brought up in disregard of his commandments. The consequence is that selfishness triumphs, and hatred sows death. “They cross the skies,” he writes for the soldiers in 1943, “with no one able to prevent their passage, those artifacts of Technology that threaten to bury mankind under the rubble of that which has been raised at the cost of so much work.” (Ib.) They are the consequences of the loss of faith, announced more than a century ago by Dupanloup.¹ Where faith in God is lost, and to the extent it is lost, “barbarism, ferocity, and slavery advance, symbolized by hammers and sickles or by false crosses.” (SS, II, 171)

Quoting Montesquieu, Arizmendiarieta writes: “it is wonderful that the Christian religion, which offers no other argument more than happiness in the next life, has also consolidated happiness in this one” (Ib. cf. SS, II, 286). That is the only way the early Christian community was possible, in which slave and free, rich and poor, Roman and barbarian, were able to live in equality and full fraternity, because “the fulfillment of the eternal laws in and through Christ erased those differences” (Ib. 103). Distance from God, in contrast, entails chaos and disorder, and the ruin of peace, both external and internal. Selfishness reigns in men, and violence in society. “Where God does not reign, there is war.” (Ib. 102)

In the years of the Second World War, these ideas appear very firm in Arizmendiarieta. A year later, returning once more to the topic of war, it seems to him to have no other explanation than the abandonment of God by mankind. War is absurd. Why do rulers send their people to war? It cannot be ambition for command, or for wealth. “If what has been spent on war had been destined to the production of automobiles, every inhabitant of the Earth, including women and children, could have had a car. And yet there was more than enough money... A billion villas could have been built. Just with what is spent in an hour, houses for a million working families

¹ F. Dupanloup (1802-1878), French prelate, illustrious pedagogue (teacher of Renan); bishop of Orleans beginning in 1849, partisan (with Lacordaire and Montalembert) of the freedom to teach, head of the Catholic liberals under Napoleon III, staunch enemy of the Ultramontane L. Veuillot, contrary to the definition of papal infallibility. Liberal and anti-bonapartist, all his political activity was at the service of the ideal of the restoration. Arizmendiarieta (PR, I, 102) transcribes the following phrase of his: “Draw away from Christ, ignore his commandments and his teachings... and tomorrow, we will be in mutual frightful disorder, and all our material progress, of which we are so proud, will bring us only to the hands of a studied barbarism and tyranny, to give new and unparalleled strength to oppression and ruin.”

can be made... With income on the capital invested in military expenses by warring States during these years, all the costs could be covered for the working population all over the world to have a pension, accident insurance, unemployment insurance, disease insurance, etc., for hundreds of years, without the need for them to put in a penny.” (Ib. 104)

War is absurd, it has no possible rational explanation. How to explain it, then? “War is a lash that God wields over a treacherous mankind. Noncompliance with eternal laws has this sanction.” (Ib. 105)

Again and again, Arizmendiarieta insists that “referring to the present calamity, we can assert without fear of error that one of the motives that has moved the Almighty to allow the chain reaction of this World War is to punish the crimes of individuals and of peoples” (SS, I, 105). It does not come only from economic imbalances and the struggle of interests, nor is it only the result of economic or hegemonic objectives, but is, rather, “the consequence of profound moral causes, of the official public negation of the royalty of Christ, of the abandonment of his law of truth and of love, of forgetting human solidarity and Christian charity, of the lack of knowledge of authority and of the Supreme Being and of the moral order established by Him. These laws were so serious and so universal, that [ignoring them] had to result in the universal and nameless disaster we are witnessing” (Ib.).

With the war over, in April of 1946, Arizmendiarieta keeps insisting on the still-recent “lesson of history”: “Let us not forget it, because the lesson is edifying, it is worthy of keeping in mind. Not long ago, man had more than enough bread, to the point where he felt saturated, and even to such a point that its possession and security seemed to be guaranteed, and, in effect, he thought that he no longer needed ask God for it, or hope in God for it. He forgot all about the Our Father, stopped invoking the celestial Father, stopped looking to heaven to remember God the common father, and, of course, did not take long to forget the common brotherhood of all men, who started to look on each other as strange beings, and at last, to consider each other irreconcilable enemies, and thus, civilization, which is first and foremost coexistence, collapsed” (SS, II, 285). When God is abandoned, and mankind appears to have been freed from everything, there is the rise of “those fetishes which have been worshiped with nothing less than rivers of blood” (Ib. 286).

A grave issue is posed here for Arizmendiarieta. The novelty of Christ’s teaching about God stems precisely from its conception of God as Father, giving primacy to love over the Law. “Law and doctrine for Him [God] are not ends, but rather means that help man, who is misled and sick, to arrive at the heart of God, from which he proceeds. Just as the channel or the causeway has the merit of conducting water to its endpoint, so the law and doctrine God gives to man is with the objective that he will return to the

paternal lap, and if God urges the fulfillment of those laws through various means, even by punishment and threat, he always does so guided by the feeling of love for man.” (SS, I, 101) The precept of loving God, and in God, one’s neighbor, is not one of those 613 commandments which the pious Jew must scrupulously fulfill; it is the only precept of the New Law.

However, war, which does not correct, but rather exterminates lives, bears no resemblance to a channel that conducts waters to a good end without losing them along the way; it cannot be understood as a usual punishment with purposes of paternal correction. War, which Arizmendiarieta recognizes is rationally inexplicable, is also inexplicable from the theological point of view. There remains no another solution than accepting that there exists “a Providence that governs the world and directs all events according to its infinitely wise and just designs” (Ib. 103). That these designs are inscrutable for man is easier to understand, since the finite does not comprehend the infinite. “We can all understand without difficulty that an eagle that glides in the air two thousand or three thousand meters up sees everything—men and events—differently than a chicken pecking in a small yard” (Ib. 105).

This prophetic—or rather, Old Testament—view of history, will not be found again with that crudity in Arizmendiarieta’s later writings. It seems specific to his early years of apostolate, still close to his personal experience of the civil war and as a prisoner of war, and also concurrent with the horrors of the World War. If the idea of war as a punishment from God does not appear again, his conviction remains firm that without God, a just social order is not possible. Years later, in 1967, commenting on the *Populorum Progressio* of Paul VI, he repeated these words of an unnamed commentator: “Certainly, man can organize the land without God, but without God, ultimately, he can only organize it against man; exclusive humanism excludes. Man can only be realized in transcending himself. According to the thoughtful words of Pascal, ‘man infinitely transcends man’ ” (FC, II, 267).

Only once do we find a related observation, in 1965, although in no way could it equate to the conception of war as a punishment from God. After chastising the enormous social differences between rich and poor nations, pointing out that such differences are causes of discomfort and of wars, he adds: “The Empires of today continue to be punished, just as the ancient ones were, with one of the worst divine punishments: blindness. They see prestige only in raising new pyramids, or cathedrals of stone, when there is no greater prestige for a people than that of bequeathing to posterity a cathedral of living stones: a humanity that is better crafted, structured, and linked” (FC, II, 74). The text makes a clear allusion, apart from the New Opera of Madrid, etc., to the construction of the Cathedral of the Holy Family of Barcelona. “As the miserable suburbs have surrounded Madrid

and Barcelona, the current Empires have been surrounded by suburbs composed of entire nations; the new slaves of the new pyramids” (Ib.).

3.2 Humanity without Christ (Considerations on nationalism)

What favors the succession of ideologies, such as going from liberalism to collectivism, is the widespread anxiety for renewal. In a liberal and individualist regime, man, abandoned to the boundless greed and ambition of the capitalist, has been freed in part, thanks to association. In this respect, the collectivist reaction offers an undeniable positive aspect: “we must recognize that all systems, Marxist or non-Marxist, all social systems have alleviated man and contributed to overthrowing that existing state of things of a century ago.” (Ib. 118) Certain bindings have been broken, which has eased the situation of man... “but it is another thing to lead him to a safe endpoint, to create a state of things, a social order, which simultaneously guarantees his subsistence and his existence as a living being, his independence and his freedom; in a word, his personality, his dignity of man” (Ib. 118). “We do not lament and weep because a state of things and a civilization or social order have passed into history in which man was not respected and was not given the consideration and treatment which, for the mere fact of being a man, corresponds to him, and he was considered to be an engine that ran on blood, an extension of machines, a flimsy commodity and subject to the same law of supply and demand. But, can our just anxiety for renewal be satisfied with a state of things like the social reality of Europe presents to us? Is the new social order we are anxious for that which the systems and political and social forms in vogue presage to us?” (Ib. 117).

Given a choice between the two extremes, liberal and collectivist, Arizmendiarrieta’s anthropological philosophy leans towards the latter. However, he shows himself to be very critical of it, because he thinks it does not sufficiently guarantee the freedom and dignity of mankind: “man, which, in the liberal and individualist system, had the experience of loneliness and realized that alone, he was nothing, has ended up losing all sense of his personal independence” (Ib.). He has come to understand himself as a mere part of a greater body, which, in the end, means the first step towards “the new slavery,” which is to say, the “new form of slavery that oppresses man in collectivist systems, in this absorbent statism” (Ib.). The role that the capitalist assumed before, today is assumed by “society,” in other words, public power, which presumes the right to have everything and everyone at its disposal, even the very life of its subjects. “We are in a social order in which the interests of man are not respected for the mere fact of being a man.” (Ib. 119) If the dignity of the person is recognized, a person deserves respect and consideration, not for their qualities (ideas, situation, etc.), but rather for the mere fact of being a person. But this principle has still not found acceptance in modern social systems. Quite to the contrary, Arizmen-

diarrieta thinks that, as a reaction to liberalism, modern society is returning to the state of things in paganism, against which Christianity had to fight for centuries.

For example, among the Greeks, if the individual deserved any consideration, it was not due to his quality of being a man, but because he was Greek, and for no other reason than being Greek. Strangers and barbarians do not deserve any consideration. In Lacedaemonia [*Sparta*], a child who was deformed or deprived of some body part was thrown off a cliff by the birth police: he was a person which could not serve or be useful. In Rome, it was the title of Roman citizen that made a man, in fact, a man. “Is there any difference between the spirit that animates our European civilization and what we have just described, when men are inculcated with a patriotism that is so exaggerated that it carries in its bowels hatred for all that is not itself, when every right is reduced to strength, and no more value is recognized in man than those that come from belonging to a nationality, or those that come from the service provided to the State, when the very right to life is not given to man except insofar as the State recognizes it?” (Ib. 120). Modern States sacrifice millions of lives to their security, or to their spirit of revenge, or to their imperialist ambitions, as if the purpose of human life consisted of supporting the ambitions of governments. If it is agreed that man should remain subject to the State, then flinging those who cannot show positive utility to the State into the abyss must be a logical consequence. Along these lines, “the Lacedaemonian legislation has faithful interpreters in Europe today,” affirms Arizmendiarieta, without specifying what he is referring to, although perhaps he is thinking of laws on euthanasia and abortion.

Modern nationalisms constitute one form of collectivism. “It resurrects, with all its strength, the formidable maxim of the ancients, *salus populi*, the salvation of the people, the pretext for so many and such horrendous attacks, the pretext that sometimes wraps itself in the mask of social or common interest, and leads to a frenetic and ferocious patriotism, which superficial men—in the words of de Balmes—admire in the ancient republics” (Ib. 117). Arizmendiarieta clarifies that in no way does he mean to exalt individualist selfishness that refuses to give its life for the homeland under any circumstances; nor does he want to deny the value of heroism, to the extent that it is just and laudable. But, he does believe it necessary to draw attention to the investment of values in many such gestures, when they are inspired and motivated by ideals that are in no way worth the cost of the sacrifice of human lives, like many of the affairs that public powers engage in with financial purposes, or conquest, or revenge—purposes that, in the end, “are the ones, both today and in other times, that induced empires to declare those horrendous wars, which cost so much blood to obtain so little” (Ib. 120). Modern States, endowed with powerful technological means

of persuasion, achieve the adherence of their subjects to the extreme of inculcating, as supreme values, attitudes and conduct which really mean the denial of all human dignity. "The very acts of heroism and the very patriotism that are admired and extolled today often have a certain note of sadness to them, because more than an exaltation of human values, more than a testimony of a man who overcomes, they are a violent extortion of a man who is destroyed, of man who, in a supreme gesture, recognizes his own nothingness... sacrificing his life in the interest of ideals that do not deserve such sacrifice and reveal the low esteem we have for ourselves."²

While Arizmendiarieta was expressing himself in these terms, men continued to give lives "for the homeland" in the battlefields of the Second World War. Would this bloody struggle be possible, wonders Arizmendiarieta, if man was conscious of his dignity? The investment of values that has gone on is extremely grave. "The gesture of the Roman slave who, not wanting to survive its owner, is killed, is also heroic, if you like, but it reveals to us the destruction of the human personality; we also admire Indian women who calmly throw themselves onto the funeral pyre after their husbands have died; but the heroism of the Roman slaves and the self-denial of Indian women are not an obvious sign of souls, but rather, are the result of not knowing one's own dignity, of imagining oneself consecrated to another being, absorbed by him, of seeing existence itself as a secondary thing, with no more objective than to serve someone else's existence." (Ib. 121)

Modern society is, in Arizmendiarieta's opinion, returning to Greek, pre-Christian conceptions, unaware of individual human dignity, as can be seen in two aspects which Arizmendiarieta argues as examples: the lack of respect for life and modern slavery.

"Wherever life is not seen as sacred, as useless-miserable and weak as it may be—and the killing of a child who has just been born, or who has not been, is not counted among homicides the same as the murder of man in the prime of life, and individuals are not considered to have rights that society must respect, with secrets that it cannot interfere with, or costly sacrifices are demanded that are not first justified by a true need, the spirit of Lacedemonia, of Greece and Rome is revived." (Ib. 125-126)

The most eminent spirits of Greece, like Plato and Aristotle, approved of slavery, just as today, that more refined form of slavery is approved of, "but in the end, is still slavery," which is "the huge mass of workers who are excluded from the banquet of life" (Ib. 126). The situation of these workers, in proportion to the advancement and progress the rest of the world has made in the meantime, has scarcely any advantage over that of the ancient slaves; nor can it be said that "the factory owners, who think that they give the worker everything he is owed and unscrupulously keep those immense benefits, which, in the end, have come from the effort and of the spiritual,

² The allusions to "vital space" (SS, I, 125), the Plato quote relative to the regulation of sexual relations to keep the race pure (Ib. 124), etc., seem to indicate that the nationalism to which Arizmendiarieta primarily refers is German National Socialism.

technical and material contribution of their workers,” deserve a better description than the ancient slave-owners. Arizmendiarieta preaches hard words in the Parish of Mondragon. “What capitalist or master considers [*their workers*] brothers—as they really are? Because if he considered them as such, sons of the same father, sharing in the same inheritance and a common fate, how, in good consciousness, could he take away everything he can carry?” (Ib. 126).

The parallelism continues: just as Antiquity, lost in darkness, clamored for a redeemer, “from the bottom of this social, political, ethical or moral disorder, also comes a common cry, asking for a savior.” (Ib.) In the pagan world, that clamor was a reliable testimony to the powerlessness of reason to lead man to a new order; today, on the contrary, after twenty centuries of Christianity, “it is, more than anything else, an accusation against us, Christians who have not been able to project the light we have received from Christ over the world, an accusation against those Christian generations who have failed to create a Christian order in the world.” (Ib. 126-127)

It is worthwhile here to quote Arizmendiarieta’s Christian self-criticism at full length; it also shows his social rhetoric:

We, Christians of the twentieth century, must recognize that we are responsible before God, before our conscience and also before history and the world, for these atrocities, for these deviations, for this paganism reigning in all spheres, paganism which we cannot cover up, but rather must unmask and combat, but combat as Christ would combat it, fully accepting his creed and his doctrine, accepting it and living it and bringing it into practice in all spheres, in the moral in the first place; the moral and Christian order which turns on two hinges, which are justice and charity, justice and charity which are equally mandatory in Christian doctrine, justice and charity, which are complements of each other, and not, as some would like to think, replacements for each other. And do not believe, as it often seems to be believed, that the political order is independent of the Christian, that it is a sphere in which Christ and his doctrine have no entry; nor let it be believed that while the crucifix hangs on the wall, we are excused from other duties, and that hearts can give free rein to passions of hate and revenge. And, while Christ guarantees respect and obedience to authority, identifying it with himself, “who resists authority resists God,” says Saint Paul; authority has to know that in the Christian conception, to rule is to serve; to serve, in the first place, the interests of families and individuals, because, just as God, the supreme authority, is love and, as such, does not make contact with his children except to fill them with his benefits, in the same way, authority should be in contact with its subjects to dictate rules that are instructive, beneficent, and self-denying. And no less than in the moral and political sphere, Christ also has interests in the social and economic. How many times do we see Christ in the chapel—imprisoned—but refuse to see him in the gears of a safe! And unfortunately, it is very true what they say: “He is supported fraudulently, perhaps no longer with the throne on the altar, but with the treasury on the altar of the Church.

We Christians have done no more than discuss everything, accepting as much

as we like of the Gospel; Christians, who, possessing an all-encompassing doctrine of life, have kept what pleased us and abandoned what displeased us about it, we are responsible for all of these disasters, for all of these deviations. And today, in view of that paganism which we saw triumph in ancient times and be reborn in our days, we need to proclaim that we do not believe in the promises of those who do not respect man as man, recognizing in him certain inalienable rights, of those who see in man no more than an animal, a subject, with no more mission than to be useful and advantageous to society; nor do we believe in the Christianity of those who have the name of God on their lips, but whose God is not the Christian God, which is the only absolute goal of human life, God the Father, who has other children who deserve the same consideration and the same respect, who must be respected and loved, because they are also children of God, and have the same destiny as us, God the Redeemer who has redeemed man, and not the State, God the Rewarder, who must remunerate man, who is immortal, and who has a supernatural destiny. We believe only in Christ, who has words of peace and eternal happiness, and not only eternal, but also human, the only human happiness mankind is capable of in this vale of tears.

“There are silences that are betrayals”: it is the obligation of today’s Christians to remind man that he is more than a machine, and also very different from herd animals. It is necessary to oppose modern doctrines which, ignoring human dignity, “bring confusion to minds, and to the social order; they bring a lamentable inversion of values, despotic, unbearable, brutal, inhumane, and unnatural tyranny.” (Ib. 152)

4. The ruin of the family

“According to the teachings of physiology, the great struggle between life and death is settled in the narrow limits of each one of the cells that make up the human body, and in the same way, the choice between civilization and barbarism is made around this small social institution we call the family” (SS, II, 61).

In this social cell, the life of society is at stake in both senses: in the immediate and natural sense, the procreation of life, and in the cultural sense, the life of great values. The family is “the first school where we learn to think, and the first temple where we are taught to pray” (Ib. 58, 61).

4.1 Rights and responsibilities of parents

The first right and obligation of parents consists of knowing and practicing their dignity and authority. “A parent is a monarch by natural right,” writes Arizmendiarieta (Ib. 48). But this dignity and authority is not recognized, either by parents themselves, or by the context (especially by the State). Hence, “one of the deepest evils that afflict mankind today, the loss of the principle of authority (while this may seem absurd, it is not authority, but rather brute strength that reigns in the world), has its origin in this

surrender of parental authority,” (Ib.) which is followed by the universal surrender of the principle of authority, “as our dearly departed Cardinal Gomá says so well.” (Ib.) “Civilization is in danger because the family is in crisis.” (Ib. 57)

The family, therefore, participates in the current universal crisis; it seems to even be its origin. But, in fact, what has stripped value from the family, according to the young Arizmendiarieta, is absorbent statism, which ignores and infringes on “the primordial right (of the family) to educate and form with absolute priority over the State” (Ib. 48).

Parents are gravely obliged to have knowledge of their rights, which is to say, to the formation of their consciences regarding their rights and duties, regarding their responsibilities (Ib. 50). Secondly, parents are obliged to form associations, since they cannot effectively defend their rights, nor fulfill, or see to the fulfillment of, their obligations in isolation (Ib. 51). Parents—monarchs and sovereigns—lose all authority as they cross the threshold of their houses: it is not recognized either by society or by the State. “The democratic constitutions of States infringed on their rights by recognizing the same value in the suffrage of the parent, who, as we have said, is a sovereign by right in that first society of the family, and that of any other individual for the mere fact of being an individual. And no less than democratic constitutions, the constitutions of totalitarian States also violate rights of parents, arrogating the right to educate and form children, independent of consent of the parent, to whom this right pertains” (Ib. 52-53).

The rights and obligations of parents as educators and caretakers of children cannot be limited to their own home. They are extended to the street, the plaza, the cinema, the theater. Parents have the inalienable right to the position of being legislators and rectors of everything that has to do with the cultural and social training of children, and should act as such, moralizing, for example, shows, setting schedules for evening shows, etc. (Ib. 54). These are rights and duties which can be acted on only if parents associate.

The best service which parents can provide to mankind is good education of children. “Education is the key to the destiny and future of our youth, and of our society itself” (Ib. 95). Only evil comes spontaneously from inside people, good demands intense work. The resource that makes noble feelings and good ideas bloom in people is education. The moral character of the people of tomorrow depends on this: “man is man more because of education than birth” (Ib.). Arizmendiarieta thinks that the reason for marriage to exist is more education than procreation itself.

The home should be the last bulwark of spiritual values, of the highest

essences of our civilization (Ib. 98). And parents should strive to transmit those values to their children, ideas and feelings with which and because of which mankind feels itself to be such, sacrificing life itself for them, if necessary. “Do you yourselves not love your ideas and your feelings more than your material goods? Are there not many among you that have preferred to lose them before renouncing certain ideas and certain feelings?” (Ib. 96). You can hear the post-war echo in Arizmendiarieta’s words.

Arizmendiarieta laments the ease with which boys and girls stop attending school. He laments it, first, because without culture, there is no freedom: an uneducated people will have to remain perpetually as minors, unable to administer itself, dependent on those who can, even if it is in the name of the people. Secondly, because he considers “if it is meritorious work to make of any corner of land more productive and beautiful, then it is greatly advantageous to make a human heart richer in feelings and more elevated and noble in its aspirations and desires” (Ib. 100).

The individual is made more by education than birth. The parents, who have procreated the child, must act decisively in education, which cannot be limited to imparting technical knowledge and enough external forms of courtesy to function comfortably in the world. “If man is what he eats, his education is a problem of food; but if we’re convinced that man is what he knows and loves, what he wishes and pursues, then his education is a problem of food for the soul; that is, a delicate, internal, constant operation, the molding of his soul, for which all of that well of patience, selflessness, zeal, and insight God has placed in the heart of parents is needed” (Ib. 101).

4.2 The family, source of life

The life of man is ephemeral, but God wanted it to fill centuries in history, perhaps centuries upon centuries (Ib. 61). And the source of life, the legitimate source, is the family. “Why can human life not sprout from another source other than the family?” Arizmendiarieta is as clear and accurate as he is brief: “Because God did not want it” (Ib. 62). He goes no further on the topic.

On abortion, he states that, fortunately, “the majority of our faithful still have enough moral sensitivity to understand the horror of these practices which, on the other hand, wreak such havoc that they only are comparable with the victims produced by modern wars and, in the judgment of competent researchers, exceed the number from wars” (Ib. 78). He condemns contraceptives and the sterilization laws of Nazi Germany (13 June, 1933), “that country which has presented itself to the eyes of our Christians as a model of social life” (Ib. 80). If there were some in Spain who knew “how to ponder and exalt” Nazi Germany, which presented itself as the most advanced country in Europe, as a social model, etc., Arizmendiarieta was

certainly not among them.

The family deserves more interest as the source of moral and cultural life. “Man is not born good, despite Rousseauian utopias, but rather, profoundly altered in the very constituent principles of his moral being. He is born ignorant, and with a tendency to evil. A small child, who was just born, carries the germ of those tremendous antagonisms between the spirit and the flesh of which Saint Paul speaks. This phenomenon is unique among living beings. Every being has a purpose and a tendency that carries it towards it. Following the causeway indicated or imposed by instinct, they arrive at their purpose; they arrive at full development in all areas. They need nothing more. In contrast, man, without the education of his intellectual and moral faculties, cannot become, by his own strength, what we call man. He will have all the essential constituents of his nature, but will not talk, will not know what is good and evil. He will not be suitable for society and, if God did not grant him extraordinary grace, he would not arrive at his purpose. Education is indispensable, and education is the function of the family” (Ib. 63).

If human nature is not cultivated with the greatest care, people end up being wolves to their peers. In fact, it is not the inclemency of weather, inevitable blows like disease, or the capriciousness of luck that cause us to suffer the most. “The greatest part of our suffering is caused by the lack of will, of attention, of love, and of tolerance that we have for each other” (Ib. 89). Without a careful education, human energy is either wasted or is employed for evil. “In the wild forest, the strength and the vigor of the land is squandered, both on the sap that fertilizes the fruit tree which gives delicious fruit and on that which fertilizes the thorn or briar” (Ib. 89). It is in the family where people can learn to develop human sensibility, noble ideas, feelings of selflessness, detachment, service, love for their peers. “The social training of man starts and is nearly finished in the family” (Ib.).

“We are adults,” concludes Arizmendiarieta, “to the extent that we have participated in the human feelings and ideals which we were taught in the family” (Ib. 88).

4.3 Basis of society

Destroying the family not only dries up the current of life at its source, but even if the causeway of life continued to be full, “it would no longer be men who fill the face of the land, they would be monsters” (Ib. 63) and social life would run to its ruin.

Indeed, Arizmendiarieta believes that it is a clear lesson of history—he likes to argue on the basis of history, “that no people, no civilization, no Empire was capable of surviving the ruin of the family” (Ib.). For example,

Rome, etc.

On the other hand, “there is one people in history, a people that has survived all disasters, all misfortunes... which have been many in its life... the Hebrew people, the Israelite people; and part of the explanation of that people with their spirit, with their idiosyncrasy, is rooted in family life” (Ib.).

“The family, in addition to being the headquarters of life, in addition to being the workshop where the best works are crafted, is the vehicle of tradition, is the bond of union between the past and the future. It is what gives stability to mankind” (Ib. 64).

4.4 Marriage

“It is immoral with an intrinsic evil to seek pleasure for pleasure’s sake.” (Ib. 74). With this terrible phrase, a whole chapter of matrimonial life may close. Arizmendiarieta is emphatic: selfishness requires this impassable moral barrier. To accept pleasure for itself would be to accept selfishness as good. Whoever wants to combat selfishness cannot accept pleasure for its own sake. It is a matter of logic and consequence, and man “has to recognize the primacy of reason over instinct” (Ib. 70).

On the other hand, “one has the right to pleasure to the extent that he is ready to do what nature demands,” and, by the same token, “pleasure must be inseparable from the function to which it must be oriented, to the very purpose of the act” (Ib. 73). People “have to recognize the existence of a natural law which binds all nature, and them, as part of it” (Ib. 70).

The doctrine spelled out in the opening phrase, which Arizmendiarieta explains as a doctrine that the Church has always supported, does nothing but sanction a law and a standard already imprinted on nature itself, and taught by reason. “Christianity is the antithesis of selfishness, and as a supernatural doctrine and a supernatural religion, there is no philosophical or ethical system that vindicates the rights of nature with such logic, with such exactness, as Christianity” (Ib. 72).

Recently ordained as a priest, Arizmendiarieta reached Mondragon in February of 1941. Just eight months later, he started to give talks on the family, whose notes are preserved, and we have been able to use them here. This was long before the days in which Arizmendiarieta, the great reflector of experience, would discover the positive aspects of instinct, of selfishness... which he would accept, directed and domesticated, as positive factors for the building of the cooperative community, which he himself will frequently compare with the family.

The same arguments on natural law and reason will be made to defend

indissolubility of the matrimonial bond. Those who, not only by sacrament, but by the very impulse of nature, have devoted themselves mutually, cannot be dissolved (Ib. 67-68): it would be against natural law and against reason, “that reason, that light which is able to foresee everything and required to provide what it has seen” (Ib. 68).

Concerned about the crisis society was suffering, Arizmendiarieta believed, in these years, that he was able to contribute to the reconstruction of society, renewing family life on solid bases and reinforcing its presence in public life. Society cannot be renewed without first renewing the family, and the family cannot be renewed without defending and protecting marriage, “the cornerstone on which the family must sustain itself, and, what’s more, the heart from which the family must receive its life” (Ib. 65). The strength of family life depends on the solidity of marriage, and the future of mankind depends on the strength of family life.

It will be precisely in the virtues on which Arizmendiarieta works to consolidate marriage, where, beyond the changes his thought will go through over time, continuity can be observed most clearly. The virtues identified as the fundamentals of marriage are, in fact, tolerance, on which he insists (Ib. 83, 84), detachment, selflessness, the spirit of sacrifice, generosity, mutual support, love, fidelity, constance (“marriage is not the tomb of love, but rather of passion” Ib. 82)... A mirror of morality, which will fundamentally be the same one that will be found again, with variations required by the situation, as the basis of the cooperative family.

4.5 The problem of housing

But, together with the frame of ethical values, the reality of the physical setting also contributes to configuring the character of intrafamily relationships. That is why Arizmendiarieta provided express attention to the topic of housing as a minimum necessary spatial enclave to attain a dignified family coexistence.

We will briefly review the problem of housing, “the most elemental of needs” (PR, II, 40; cf. PR, I, 179-181), for the significance it has in relation to the family, even though in Arizmendiarieta’s writings, the topic is dealt with nearly exclusively on practical aspects. Among the problems in the home, Arizmendiarieta has no doubt that not having a home is the gravest of all (PR, I, 217; cf. PR, II, 22, 26, 40). These are the early postwar years.

Two theses which may seem familiar to us, to begin: first, our society cannot be healthy while its first cell, the family, lacks for adequate living space. Second: The family or marriage must have an independent home to function in life as corresponds to its nature (PR, II, 6). Family life is not only threatened by the corrosive ideas of liberalism, later inherited by socialism

(PR, II, 1), but also by the lack of hygienic conditions and of the minimum necessary comfort in housing. In Mondragon, “a very healthy people regarding ideas” (Ib. 2) this constitutes a much graver danger for the family than liberal or socialist influence: in Mondragon, family life is reduced to a minimum expression, which is how certain attitudes and social convulsions that were seen can be explained. The people of Mondragon live in the tavern, in the street, and are formed by the general environment more than by the family. There is nothing strange about the way various social tendencies are propagated rapidly, when they are the ones that predominate on the street. The general environment is always the most capricious, most fickle, least stable, least moderate. This is how to explain that the people of Mondragon at times appear to be easily infected by the general environment, lacking moderation and stability, at the mercy of the blowing wind (Ib. 3).

And the people of Mondragon—we are reading texts from 1941—cannot satisfy their demands for a certain convenience and comfort at home. They take refuge in the tavern. On the other hand, the people of Mondragon do not lack for a sense of social justice, and can do no less than rebel, seeing that industrial development is due to their work, and being unable to then participate, in proportion to their contribution, in the material well-being they themselves created.

As in other times, they have raised their voice against the existing hygienic conditions in the factories, and have been able, with their struggle, to win the exemplary working conditions they have today; at that time, they rebelled because they lacked those conditions in their own homes. “It is not enough for us to sing the excellence of family life with eloquent phrases, we will move no one with the beautiful idyllics we could write concerning the home, while the listener or reader has to get along in the darkness or discomfort of a hole in the wall or a small room. It is not enough to lift up our voice against alcoholism, while the tavern is the only comfortable and decent place the worker finds. The family needs its space or independence—this is precisely what is attractive about the home—and with that independence, privacy and mutual trust between its members is possible. And that independence and that space are lacking when several families are grouped into the small frame of a house. As can be seen in the statistics (...), in Mondragon, those cases are more common than may be believed” (Ib. 4).

For more than ten years, we will see Arizmendiarieta demand joint action between the authorities and citizens with the purpose of resolving this problem. We see that ultimately, a construction charity (“Mondragon Home Association”) is founded in August of 1953.

Years later, in 1967, Arizmendiarieta again begins to work on the topic of housing, this time, to criticize two excesses which could be an

index of the change brought about over those years. He first criticizes the widespread desire, which is not at all reasonable, for each and every person to have a privately-owned house, since the situation of being a tenant lacks social prestige. Secondly, the psychosis of housing, which makes us think that a new house necessarily requires new furniture, new household goods, new everything, leading to such family indebtedness that it can barely be overcome over a long series of years (FC, III, 42-45). In this respect, he criticises the housing policy.

During the last years of his life, with Arizmendiarieta very concerned about the fate of old people, the topic of housing again emerges, this time from the particular perspective of the needs of this social group: “Provisions must be made so that our men and women in the last stage of their lives have a full urban context, with services and attention in accordance with their particular conditions, when, because of the evolution of the habits of social life, they find themselves more or less alone: this is when it could be most justified to provide apartments with all the necessary community services, affordable to all, at their own discretion. But this assumes a full conception and projection of residences for them” (CLP, II, 112). But this topic remains inconclusive.³

³ The Caja Popular wanted continue in the line of Arizmendiarieta’s reflection after his death, cf. Aguirre, I., *Ocio activo y tercera edad*, Caja Popular, 1981

4.6 Family and the social question

All people, says Arizmendiarieta, aware of the decadence of mankind that we suffer from, and interested in saving it from the current crisis, agree on the urgency of saving family life (Ib. 59). But the family is being destroyed by proletarianization and standardization, which is the ruin of man and the end of the family (Ib. 60).

Arizmendiarieta demands, as a minimum of social justice, that women not be forced to leave the home to look for work; that children not have to start to work before an appropriate age; and, above all, the family wage (CAS, 183), which are all demands, he says, that are clearly expressed in papal encyclicals. After praising the new State legislation that establishes the family wage, he continues: “Anyone who reads this quote will believe with true simplicity that it is fulfilled, if not in all, at least in almost all companies, and I think I can assert that not only is it not in all, but rather is in none, where this Pontifical rule [*the sufficient family wage*] is fulfilled” (Ib.). He gives the example of a company with more than a thousand workers (Ib. 184) and which he considers a better case than most businesses: “I understand, then, and I want to reach my first conclusion, which I offer to all employers that boast of being Catholic: analyze the economic situation of the workers’ families to be able to aspire to comply with the demands of the living wage demanded by Pontifical doctrine in the name of natural right in the recent social encyclicals” (Ib.).

“The first social duty of a businessperson is to organize himself and work so that his employees can earn a wage sufficient to cover the elemental needs of life. And as long this objective has not been achieved, no one has the right to be called a Christian businessperson. I do not know how any benefit can be ascribed to the business that does not reach this goal, nor even how someone who does not feel capable of that can justifiably continue using the title and authority of businessperson” (Ib. 182).

Unjust economic conditions are undoing family life with the misery in which it is forced to exist (SS, II, 58). If it is argued that the country is poor, or that the momentary economic situation does not allow real wage raises, Arizmendiarieta, apart from other observations of the strictly economic kind, replies with the moral argument that is always possible to distribute poverty more equitably (CAS, 185). “One of the things that never ceases to draw attention of foreigners who have visited Spain is the difference in the standard of living that exists in our homeland between the wealthy and the proletarian classes. However natural inequalities may be, when they are disproportionate to the degree of general prosperity of a country, they are unsustainable, and even more so when it is a country that prides itself on following the doctrine of the Gospel” (Ib.).

4.7 In line with a future tradition

The doctrine we just discussed on the family shows us the line that Arizmendiarieta’s thought takes and which he fundamentally will follow until the end. We can highlight two sources, or foundations, of this thought: one is the Church’s social doctrine; the other, really the same, but historically implemented in certain social groups that directly influenced Arizmendiarieta: the tradition of the Basque union and social movement prior to the war of ’36.

The fundamental value that Christian social doctrine sees in the family is well known.⁴ Additionally, this importance increased as the family was seriously affected by forms of totalitarianism and by the war.⁵ As for the Spanish Church, Rodríguez de Coro observed that while the Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy did not show itself to generally be very sensitive to social problems in the postwar years, the problem of homelessness was energetically addressed by *Ecclesia* from the very beginning (January 1941). The ruins of the war and the rural immigration to big cities (which, in Euskadi, will start later than Madrid or Barcelona) doubtlessly forced this.⁶

According to the same author, the defense of the family as a fundamental value, prior to the State, of its sacred right and duty of the education of children, etc., after the Spanish war, would have a particular and political reason for being. It would shape a decisive chapter in the bitter power struggle between Catholic traditionalists and Falangists, who were partisans

⁴ The treatise *Códigos Malinas* opens, after an introduction, dedicating the first chapter to the family. It is worth reproducing the first article here, which was quoted by Arizmendiarieta on several occasions (cf. SS, II, 58): “The family being the source whence we received life, the first school where we learn to think, and the first temple where we learn to pray, it is necessary to combat everything that destroys it or breaks it, and to praise and stimulate everything that favors its unity, its stability, its fertility and its prosperity.” *Códigos Malinas*, Sal Terrae, Santander 1962, 58.

⁵ Calvez, J.I. and Perrin, J., *Iglesia y Sociedad económica*, Mensajero, Bilbao 1965, 129-133.

⁶ Rodríguez de Coro, F., *Colonización política del catolicismo*, CAP, Saint Sebastian 1979, 200-210. It is necessary to also remember the problem of the insufficient condition of existing housing. According to the United Statistics Service, *El Bienestar en España. Un índice de evolución del nivel de vida para el período 1950-75*, an index of the evolution of the standard of living for the period 1950-75, Madrid 1977, in 1950, only 51% of existing housing had a toilet; 33.7%, running water, and no more than 9% had a bath or shower. To get an idea of the gravity of the problem of homelessness, with which Arizmendiarieta was confronted, it is enough to say that in Mondragon, according to the SIADECO study, *Industry herri baten azterketa, Arrasate eta bere etorkizuna*, Etor, Bilbao 1972, 49, 74.7% of the current houses (1972, in other words, three out of four) was constructed after 1950.

of a totalitarian State, which was solely responsible for education.⁷

On the importance given to the family by the prewar Basque social movement, a single text will suffice. In 1932, in full statutory euphoria, the PNV started to develop social norms, with the aim of organizing a social Congress which create guidelines for the social structuring of Euskadi, which was believed to be autonomously feasible in a short time. A document drafted for this purpose by “distinguished persons, in solidarity and with recognized competence,” according to Policarpo de Larrañaga, refers in its first paragraph (after the introduction) to the family, beginning in the following terms: “The family is the cell of society, and on it rests, as on a granite foundation, all the meaning of the social life of communities. It is the first school, the first temple, the source of life...”⁸ Arizmendiarieta would not express himself any other way.

5. The working class

From Arizmendiarieta’s first writings, a lively interest in the worker question is observed. However, in the writings from his early years, perhaps because of their character, this is posed more as a religious issue than as really social or political-economic. The evolution of his thought on this problem is clear. Later writings will no longer highlight the family as the cell of social life, but rather the factory. It will no longer be about creating the conditions of a more human life at home, but rather, on the job. Certainly one influence on this evolution was the fact that the acute problem of housing, in the early postwar years, is being solved, while the blind development of capitalism in Euskadi, during the same years, intensifies the worker problem. But, without a doubt, helped by such situations, Arizmendiarieta will come to a more economic vision of society, in which the factory replaces the family as the core of the social fabric. This period of his thought will be analyzed in the second part of this chapter. For the moment, we limit ourselves, as indicated, to the statements in his first writings.

5.1 Apostasy of the working-class masses

Arizmendiarieta is very concerned about distancing of the working masses from the influence of the Church, about the apostasy of the working masses.

In the first place, there exist the cores, considerable groups of workers, who already publicly flaunt of their lack of religion and who do not hide their hatred for the Church, who vulgarly were called reds (CAS, 15). It is a grave fact in itself, since the mission of the Church is to win everyone for Christ; but it would not be so important if it was not accompanied by the phenomenon of general indifference. It is not only they who find themselves separated from the Church: “it is all or almost all the workers, even

⁷ Rodriguez de Coro, F., Op. cit., 329, 381-383.

⁸ Larrañaga, P., *Contribución a la historia obrera de Euzkalerria*, Auñamendi, Donostia/Saint Sebastian 1977, vol. II, 153. He wrote that, in the judgment of P. Larrañaga, “collects Catholic social doctrine and abounds in the social thought of Solidarity” (ELA/STV) (p. 152), rigorously follows the *Códigos Malinas*, both in form and content.

those who externally still practice religion and go to church, who are also intimately unlinked, disconnected from the Church, because they have lost trust in her and in the solutions she advocates” (CAS, 15-16). It is the workers who remain united with and trust in the Church who are the exception, such a small number that it can barely be taken into consideration, because they do not represent anything; the rest, which is to say, almost all, have lost all trust in doctrine, in the methods of the Church, in the Church itself; “in a word, they have personally apostatized from the Church, even when they externally remain united to her” (Ib. 16). They will have to end up breaking all external ties, taking the position of those who already flaunt their impiety.

The problem is grave. First, because the mission of the Church is to preach the gospel to the poor, and it is precisely the poor who “leave the Church because they feel that we who represent it are helpless; they leave the Church and abandon faith because they do not find in us solutions for the pressing problems in their lives” (Ib.).

It is also grave because, in many cases, we are talking specifically about people who are very sensitive to the truth and to justice, people of magnificent dispositions. “Does the Gospel, message of life, teach us nothing more than to live on our knees? Does the Gospel, perfect code of justice and charity, teach us nothing more than to live for heaven, with the kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, having no reflection here on Earth?” (SS, II, 21).

“One would have to be quite deaf or live very far from where we are not to take heed of one of the most widespread complaints among all working people, victims of unbearable conditions of life. This most grave complaint to which I refer is harshly censored by the activity of the hierarchy and of the clergy, who pretend not see or do not see the very heavy burden that weighs upon the weak, upon the workers, and they do not raise their voice to condemn all those mercantile procedures that exploit the need and hunger of the people, or the apathy or evasiveness of the authorities who do not provide this problem all the attention it deserves. Nobody should be shocked at what I say; I do nothing more than affirm a fact, without passing any judgment” (SS, II, 306).

The distancing from the Church and the enmity against Christians are not due to the doctrine of the Gospel itself, or the Popes. On the contrary, these continue to be considered beautiful and just doctrines by the workers. Distancing, and sometimes hatred, come from the contradiction that Christians show when, on the one hand, they publicly profess those doctrines and, on the other, in their social, moral, and economic life, completely disregard them and organize a world totally differently from what they say they profess (Ib. 272).

The apostasy of the masses does not come, then, from the insufficiency of Christian social doctrine, but from the inadequacies of people who do not practice it, and make themselves responsible for its disrepute. In the middle of everything, Arizmendiarieta discovers a ray of hope in this evil. Our situation (that of Christians) would have been desperate, he observes, if we had done our part to confront evil, if we had lived our Christianity fully, if we had faithfully applied the social principles of our doctrine, and in spite of everything, we had seen the world leave the path, and go off in other directions. But we still have not seriously faced those demanding masses, with their thirst for justice, offering them the practice of our social doctrine; it has been left in the Encyclicals, and the Encyclicals left in the archives. And this encourages us today, because doctrine is to be practiced and lived (Ib. 217; cf. Ib. 200, 291): there is not a failure of doctrine, but rather the failure of its application.

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