

PART II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW ORDER

By opposing both the liberal, capitalist order, as well as all-encompassing collectivism and statism, Arizmendiarrieta seeks a new order made to suit humans. The formula, which he will try to put into practice later, will be that of the cooperative business of industrial production. Of course, the concepts of the cooperative order and the new order are not completely comparable, although at times Arizmendiarrieta shows a certain tendency to make them so. Nor can the new order be reduced to simply a new kind of enterprise.

During this phase of Arizmendiarrieta's thought, which, it could be said, now begins to take on a strength of its own, we observe a substantial change, one which we might venture to label his orientation to the future. This change is decisive. It is true that already in the first chapter, Arizmendiarrieta had called for a new order. But in a climate of general renewal, more than the establishment of a new order, the impression is left that it is really about the restoration of a very old order, one prior to the modern liberalisms and collectivisms that are responsible for the current disorder. In fact, it was about restoring morality, family, and social harmony, and the social reign of the Christian faith... It seems, then, that he was more or less openly intending, in the end, to go back to a better past in history: one prior to the ruin of family life and the apostasy of the working class, etc. This perspective, which was characteristic of Arizmendiarrieta's thought, sometimes crudely expressed in his first period (which we have not attempted to hide from the reader), makes a complete turnabout between 1945 and 1955. His historical perspective opens entirely toward the future. The crisis is understood not as the destruction of some idyllic and longed-for pre-liberal ideal, but rather as a dialectical struggle between the demands imposed by the degree of historical consciousness that has been achieved and the social structures that are unable meet them. Thus, the new order depends, more than on a transcendent truth, on a living, historical consciousness. And it clearly comes to mean an order to be constructed, not restored, in the immediate future, upon the foundation and at the pace of historical development, rather than upon the ruins of war. Arizmendiarrieta turns to the future. This change, which did not occur abruptly, but rather slowly and gradually, is nonetheless the most profound change that has occurred in his thought, and undoubtedly is the key to understanding his new positions.

The new order to be built must be human, and for this, it must fulfill some basic requirements, which Arizmendiarrieta has developed broadly and energetically, convinced that only the strength of firm conviction can build the new world that is demanded.

In the second part of our study we will attempt to lay out the fundamental principles which, in Arizmendiarrieta's view, must constitute the basis of any human order. These will necessarily also be the foundation of the cooperative order.

Let us observe that Arizmendiarrieta has not proposed to discuss how the new order should be, but rather how it can and must be built. His thoughts are always oriented to action, not to the description of an imaginary ideal. On the contrary, actions are always the wellspring from which Arizmendiarrieta's thoughts flow. This mutual dependence of action and thought is fruitful, and characteristic of his work.

Following our purpose of identifying Arizmendiarrieta's thought as clearly as possible—his sources, his personal activity, as well as his general historical context—we will first analyze these circumstances separately in a historical chapter. This will permit us to dedicate the three following chapters (3, 4 and 5) to the systematic exposition of Arizmendiarrieta's thought about the basic requirements for the building of a human order.

CHAPTER 2: YEARS OF SOWING

Arizmendiarrieta stresses that cooperativism grows and develops within a specific geographical context,¹ and he searches for its fundamental principles in Basque social tradition.²

Without intending to detract from the importance of this general point, we should point out another more immediate and more specific one: the case of Mondragon in particular, which was the fruit of a long sowing over the years by Arizmendiarrieta. In fact, its birth occurred over the 15 long years between Arizmendiarrieta's arrival in Mondragon in 1941—an old cardboard suitcase in hand—and 1956, the year when the first cooperative, which came to be known as Ulgor,³ began to function with a small core of pioneers.

1. A Bit of History

"A Bit of History" is what Arizmendiarrieta calls a short work from 1972 (EP, II, 183–186) in which he reviews the history of the League of Education and Culture. We will use the same title to attempt to situate Arizmendiarrieta's educational work in its historical context.

Before Arizmendiarrieta's arrival, Mondragon already had an Apprentice School, founded in October 1939 by the Unión Cerrajera (PR,I,12) to meet its needs exclusively.⁴ Two Brothers from Saint Viator were in charge of the classes in general culture, religion, and morals. Arizmendiarrieta, as chaplain, had an hour per week of instructional time at his disposal [Ib. 12-13].⁵

¹ This idea, more or less developed, is found in almost all the authors who have studied the cooperative movement in Mondragon. As an example, all the more representative because it deals with a cooperator, see Erdocia, J., *El cooperativismo crece y se desarrolla en un entorno geográfico determinado*, in: *Cursillo para personal de la División Empresarial*, 1974, 121-137 (CLP Archives).

² Garcia, Q., *Les coopératives industrielles de Mondragon*, Ed. Ouvrières, Paris 1970, 38, writes: "It is a recognized fact that the Basque people have a well-established personality. We can simply point out that, as far as work is concerned, responsibility, efficiency, and initiative are qualities particular to Basques. And in the social arena, solidarity and democracy are still mentioned today as forming part of the baggage of their traditions." [Translation from French by the author] Interesting observations about the specifically Basque character, or "Basqueness" of the cooperative phenomenon in Mondragon, and about whether it can be reproduced in other countries, etc, can be seen in the work *Mondragón Co-operatives: Myth or Model*, The Open University, Co-operatives Research Unit, London 1982, 24 ss., 28 ss., 72. Although these characteristics can seem a bit flattering, we fear that in this field it is all too easy to fall into unproductive exaggeration and subjectivism. It must be remembered that this cooperativism has, in fact, arisen in personal and social circumstances specific to Mondragon, and not in some other part of the Basque Country.

³ Here are the names whose initials make up ULGOR: Luis Usatorre, Jesús Larrañaga, Alfonso Gorroñoigoitia, José María Ormaechea, Javier Ortubay, cfr. LARRAÑAGA, J., *Don José María Arizmendi-Arrieta y la experiencia cooperativa de Mondragón*, Caja Laboral Popular, 1981, 124.

⁴ This School admitted only 12 apprentices per year, the "chosen twelve," cfr. ORMAECHEA, J.M., "Una solución a tiempo para cada problema," *TU*, Nr. 190, Nov.-Dec. 1976, 32.

⁵ Of the 36 apprentices registered in February 1941 (the time of Arizmendiarrieta's arrival in Mondragon), 14 were members of Catholic Action (PR, I,13).

Arizmendiarieta wanted a school of professional preparation that would be open to all the children who might want it,^[^ch2-6] and in October, 1943, despite very precarious conditions, dares to open the Professional School, which he wants to become a source of material and spiritual prosperity for Mondragon (EP, I,9). Officially established in the name of Catholic Action as a private (not cooperative) school, it will be governed in principle by “a board made up of businesspeople, representatives of the workers, and the Town Hall” (Ib. 11). ^[^ch2-6]: According to Ornelas, C., *Producer Cooperatives and Schooling: The Case of Mondragon, Spain*, 1980, 73 (unpublished, CLP Archive), at the end of 1942, the workers associated with the PNV had tried to organize a strike to demand that the Unión Cerrajera admit more students to the Apprentice School. Mollner, T., *The Design of Nonformal Education Process to Establish A Community Development Program based upon Mahatma Gandhi's Theory of Trusteeship*, 1981, 92 (unpublished, CLP Archive) notes that Arizmendiarieta himself probably tried to convince the Unión Cerrajera to expand the school. After being rejected by the company (it would not be, Mollner observes, the last time that they would refuse to help him with his plans) Arizmendiarieta most likely decided to create a new school, looking for funding from the working families themselves.

The collaboration of businesspeople was critical in this first period. But it does not take long for dependence on them to bring about the subordination of the workers, which Arizmendiarieta is not prepared to accept for his school. One more step and in 1948, the League of Education and Culture was created as legal umbrella entity for the Professional School.⁶

This school “will become, in time, the foundation of an experience which, without it, would not have been possible.”⁷ This judgment is constantly repeated both by participants (including Arizmendiarieta), as well as by all those who later have studied the Mondragon cooperative movement. Still, we should make two observations: 1. As we will see, in no way did Arizmendiarieta limit his educational activity to this school; 2. what was taught in this school still did not have the formation of cooperatives as a direct objective, although it did in fact promote a spirit of responsibility and cooperation. Arizmendiarieta did not come to Mondragon with a defined plan (for cooperatives), but rather with a few clear ideas: that workers can only free themselves through education and hard work.

Before going on to a more systematic exposition of this thought, it is appropriate to review the social and historical context in which it developed.

1.1 Euskadi comes back to life

Discussing the early postwar years, F. Urbina highlights the positive fact that Catholic Action provided a space for personal and social growth to many young people of the urban middle class, in a desolate period during

⁶ Leibar, J., D. “José María Arizmendiarieta Madariaga. Apuntes para una biografía,” *TU*, Nr. 190, Nov.-Dec. 1976, 60. Businesses such as Elma, Metalurgica Cerrajera (not Unión Cerrajera), Industrial Co-charera, Asam, etc., subsidized the school at a certain percentage per year, in addition to other assistance. The presidents of the Board of Directors generally came from these businesses. Even later, when the contributions of cooperatives gained more importance, Arizmendiarieta continued to underscore the communal, not just co-operative, character of the school. The initial financial difficulties were enormous: “there were times,” Juan Leibar informs us, “in which professors got paid a month or two late; on one occasion they even had to sell an old lathe, freshly painted, to meet the monthly payroll.”

⁷ Larrañaga, J., op. cit., 103. The main educational institutions (primarily for technical training) promoted by Arizmendiarieta are the League for Education and Culture, the Professional Polytechnical School, Alecoop, and Ikerlan. All researchers of the Mondragon cooperative movement point to their importance as the foundation of the uniqueness of this phenomenon and its development. For their history, activity, organization, etc., see the study cited above by C. Ornelas, and Thomas, H. and Logan, C., *Mondragon. An Economic Analysis*, G. Allen & Unwin, Boston/Sydney 1982, 18-19 and 52-65. The present study, which does not attempt to analyze the cooperative phenomenon as such, but rather the thought of the man who inspired it, will be limited to pointing out, from among the educational activities of Arizmendiarieta, only those aspects which have not been considered in prior research due to problems of access both to his original writing and to the archives.

which the long-term outlook for this group was grim. Catholic Action, he says, “also penetrated into the socially unprotected layers of the urban petty bourgeoisie. It did not, however, manage to reach the working class until the beginning of HOAC and JOC, in the late ’40s.”⁸

“The particular history of apostolic movements,” we continue reading from the same author, “begins for HOAC in 1946; for JOC, in 1947. HOAC was created as a result of action by the hierarchy; the man chosen to lead the outreach to the working-class faithful was Guillermo Roviroso who, from the beginning, gave the movement the stamp of working class authenticity. JOC began more at the ecclesiastical margins; it arose almost spontaneously, somewhat ‘clandestinely,’ through the actions of a few priests and activists, young workers in the Basque Country and Catalonia, and later in Madrid and Valencia. Later, in 1956, they were completely merged, as HOAC, under CA, which was officially recognized by the hierarchy.”⁹ There is no need to pause now to remember the importance of CA during these years, which is recognized and beyond dispute.

These dates deserve some correction, at least as far as Guipuzcoa, and specifically Mondragon, is concerned. Arizmendiarieta tells us that since June 11, 1940, there existed in Mondragon “an exclusively workers group, entirely made up of young men between 16 and 19 years of age, which has weekly meetings, or a sort of study group. (PR, I, 12; cfr. ib. 126).¹⁰ By February 1941, the number had reached 30 (ib.12). In May 1942, this group was named “Juventud Obrera Católica” [*Catholic Worker Youth*], better known simply as “worker youth” (ib.31); it goes by the acronym JOC (ib.32) and we are informed that in 1941-1942, it organized 45 study groups and assorted activities (ib. 32-35). The annual report for 1943 even gives us a list of members and applicants to the JOC in Mondragon (ib.38), etc. etc.

Returning to F. Urbina, who has written about this period with interest, we note that among the causes of this development of the Catholic worker he cites the following in first place: “The influence of the French apostolic movements on church leaders in Spain (JOC and Action Catholique Ouvriere), which were already very advanced.”¹¹ Urbina notes that this is especially true for the JOC of San Sebastian, Bilbao, and some other major urban centers.

Personally, we are inclined to think that the tradition and activity of groups that, before the war, were called “social apostles” or “propagandist priests” is of no less importance.¹² We cannot ignore the important role which those priests and teachers of Christian social doctrine managed to carry out under poor conditions, only to end up being shot, jailed, or exiled, and in every case, slandered and abandoned by their own ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹³ On the contrary, everything leads us to believe that Catholic worker movements in Euskadi arose after the war in perfect continuity with

⁸ Urbina, F., “Formas de vida de la Iglesia en España,” in: *Iglesia y Sociedad en España 1939-1975*, Ed. Popular, Madrid 1977, 21.

⁹ Ib. 55. The same dates are given in *Ecclesia*, N. 534, 6 October, 1951

¹⁰ It is interesting to note that one of the reasons adduced for the value of organizing young workers separately is precisely “homogeneity, which is necessary for the complete development of study circles” (PR, I, 12.)

¹¹ Urbina, F., op. cit., 51.

¹² Larranaga, P. de, *Contribución a la historia obrera de Euzkalerria*, Auñamendi, Donostia/San Sebastián 1977, vol. II, 178-180. Onaindia, A. de, *Ayer como hoy. Documentos del Clero Vasco*, Axular, Saint Jean de Luz 1975, 11. Elorza, A., *Ideologías del nacionalismo vasco*, L. Haranburu, San Sebastián 1978, 254-322 (“Los sacerdotes propagandistas y la ideología solidaria en la Segunda República”). These “propagandist priests” should not be confused with the well-known Propagandists of Herrera Oria (A.C.N. de P.), which they have nothing to do with.

¹³ Let us remember only, and well aware of the injustice this does to the many names omitted, the names of Aitzol (shot), “Don Poli” (exiled), Onaindia (exiled), Mendikute, Markiegi, Lekuona (all three shot), Azpiaz (exiled), etc. etc. This important chapter, like so many others, has yet to be written.

the doctrinal and even personal tradition of the pre-war period, with the difference that unions were prohibited. We recall as well that the aforementioned influence of progressive French Catholicism on the Basque Church dates to before the war—the International Catholic Conversations in San Sebastian will give us a new confirmation of this—and was reinforced during the war.¹⁴

This does not prevent us from recognizing that, after 1945, the wind changes in Euskadi. Limiting ourselves to the Basque Church, let us recall that around this time, the return of exiled and jailed priests is beginning.¹⁵ The defeat of Fascism is felt by Basques in general, and also by their clergy, as a victory of their own.¹⁶ Though defeated and shackled, Euskadi is beginning to move.

In 1945, Monsignor Mateo Mugica, Bishop of Vitoria in exile, writes his *Imperativos de mi conciencia* [*Demands of My Conscience*], a defense of the clergy and of the “unjustly persecuted, accused, and condemned” Basque faithful.¹⁷ In 1947, the workers celebrate May first with a general strike, successfully carried out.¹⁸ The same year, the clandestine opposition redoubles its activity with propaganda, graffiti, Basque flags (for example, on the top of the steeple of the cathedral in San Sebastian), and bombs. In Aberri Eguna, the resistance intervenes in Radio San Sebastian, transmitting a message in Basque and Castilian from the *lehendakari* [*president*] Aguirre: thirteen thousand demonstrators are gathering in the church of San Anton in Bilbao.¹⁹ In September 1948, the Seventh Congress of Basque Studies takes place in Biarritz and several lecture cycles organized by the “Gernika” International Society of Basque Studies are organized, in which social topics stand out.²⁰ When the Diocese of Vitoria (the three Basque provinces) is broken up on 1 July 1950, many priests from San Sebastian sign and publish a document which is sent to the new prelate for San Sebastian Monsignor Font y Andreu. “The speculation,” reads the letter, “practiced by the highest bodies of the State, with such severe consequences as the obvious insufficiency of salaries and shortage of food; even the very subsistence of a State clearly incapable of providing for the citizens’ most elementary material needs (food, shelter, clothing) and moral ones (the guarantee of freedom to exercise human rights)—is this matter not important enough for instruction and joint action by the Spanish Episcopate? Since the Church is not capable of preventing great abuses of power current rulers, by what right is this state of affairs offered up to the world as a Christian regime, and even as a paragon of Catholic states?”²¹ And somewhat later: “Why, while the Church continues to present among the rights of man that of unionization and freedom of information, does it remain silent in Spain before the *Sindicato Unico* [*Single Union, the state-run union, the only one allowed*] and the tightest press censorship? How can the Church complain about the “iron curtain,” when in Spain, censorship has been exercised against the Most Excellent cardinals

¹⁴ We referred earlier to Cardinal Verdier, Maritain, Mounier, Bernanos, Mauriac, etc. Let us recall also that the French Social Week in Rouen, July 1938, the last one celebrated before WWII, had not hidden its sympathies for the cause of the Basque Catholics in the Civil War, going so far as to invite a Basque delegation in exile to take part. See: *La recente Semaine Sociale de France et le problème basque*, Euzko Deya, Nr. 120, 7 August 1938. It is not surprising then, that when the Social Weeks begin again after the war in Toulouse (1946), there is a lively interest in them in Euskadi. It will be G.R. de Yurre who write about them in *Ecclesia*, and Arizmendiarieta will make ample use of the lessons they contain.

¹⁵ Iztueta, P. *Sociología del fenómeno con-testatario del Clero Vasco 1940-1975*, Elkar, Donostia-San Sebastián 1981, 144.

¹⁶ See Aguirre, J.A., *Obras Completas*, Sendoa, Donostia/San Sebastián 1981, 719-723. Also recall the “Memoria dirigida a S.S. el Papa Pío XII por miembros del Clero Vasco,” of 25 November, 1944, cfr. *Herria-Eliza, Euskadi*, Estornés Lasa, San Sebastián 1978, 353-370.

¹⁷ This document can be seen in Onaindia, A. de, op. cit., 76-117. In 1945, this document was issued in mimeograph. There is a copy in the Arizmendiarieta Archive.

¹⁸ Beltza, *El nacionalismo vasco en el exilio 1937-1960*, Txertoa, San Sebastián 1977, 35-37.

¹⁹ Ortzi, *Historia de Euskadi: el nacionalismo vasco y ETA*, Ruedo Ibérico, París 1975, 267-268. BELTZA, op. cit., 34-35.

²⁰ Beltza, op. cit., 47-48; cooperatives are among the social issues dealt with.

²¹ Onaindia, A... de, op. cit., 167-168.

and the official work of the Church, and the microphones in radio stations have been closed to any sermon or discussion not previously censored?”²²

Finally, in the same year, 1950, the clandestine publication *Egiz* (With the Truth/In Truth) appears and denounces “serious public immoralities,” understood as the suppression of worker unions, the prohibition of the Basque language, etc.²³ A total of 18 issues came out, “which met with an enthusiastic reception.”²⁴ On 20 August 1951, a decree signed by the three new prelates of the Basque Dioceses prohibits priests from having any management role or any collaboration in the journal, even if only in its circulation. The journal continues to appear. Another decree, on 20 March 1952, threatening collaborating priests with the canonical punishment of “suspensio a divinis,” finally shuts down the publication.²⁵

Between 1945 and 1950, Euskadi comes back to life; it is in full bloom. Beltza can rightly describe this period as “the Golden Era” of the Basque government in exile, in which the resistance reaps its greatest successes.²⁶ But leaving aside other aspects that touch most directly on political development, it is our belief that, among the most notable activities of this period, the International Catholic Conversations of San Sebastian, because of their importance both inside and outside of Euskadi, deserve to be highlighted.²⁷

The first Conversations of San Sebastian were organized in 1935 by a group of young intellectuals who were convinced of the need to establish a permanent exchange of ideas among Catholic thinkers of different nationalities. This need arose from the fact that religion, as historical fact, develops in different countries in very different historical and social circumstances. The diversity of perspectives and attitudes was such that there was a danger of isolation and of mutual incomprehension.²⁸ “The cultural and religious crisis,” writes C. Santamaria, “that preceded the war was at its height in 1935, and a sense of foreboding was already in the air with respect to events which, before long, would shock the world. It was in this environment that the first attempt at conversations took place...”²⁹ The second Conversations, planned for July, 1936, could not take place. But it is interesting, even ironic, to recall the subject on the agenda: “The Newness of Christian Thought in Relation to Today’s World.”³⁰

With WWII over and peace reestablished, the Conversations began again in 1947 with the topic “The Biblical Command of Love among Christians as an Element of International Solidarity.” This year and, above all, in the two following years (1948, 1949), the profound differences in thought among the participants became evident, with regard to the idea of a “Charter of Human Rights according to the Church’s Thought.” A considerable number of Catholic intellectuals of international renown took part in these debates.³¹

²² *Ib.* 169

²³ Iztueta, P. op. cit., 144-146. Belda, R., *La Iglesia española y el sindicalismo vertical*, asserts that “the first critical reflection on Spanish union organizing arose unexpectedly from the pen of (...) Brugarola,” which is to say, around 1952 or 1954. For someone for whom the only real Spain of the ’40s (with its prohibited, but real, unions and political parties) was not the legal Spain, such an affirmation from a Basque priest is, to say the least, surprising.

²⁴ Onaindia, A. de, op cit.,33. According to Onaindia, issue number 16 of these magazines reached a circulation of 40,000 copies (p. 34). This issue was printed—generally, the issues were mimeographed, so their numbers must have been much lower.

²⁵ Iztueta, P., op. cit., 144. Onaindia, A. de, op. cit., 34-36.

²⁶ Beltza, op. cit., 31. Regarding the opposition in general, see Heine, H., *La oposición política al franquismo*, Crítica/Grijalbo, Barcelona 1983.

²⁷ We thank Mr. C. Santamaria for allowing us to consult the material in his private file for this study. For the historical explanation that follows, we use the unpublished and undated (but from 1950) writing in his possession entitled *Les Conversations Catholiques Internationales de Saint-Sebastien* (the translation is ours).

²⁸ Santamaria, C., op. cit.,1

²⁹ *Ib.* 2.

³⁰ *Ib.* 2. The program planned for those conversations (C. Santamaria’s file) reveals that the social and religious themes we find in Arizmendiarieta after the war already occupied a prominent place in his thinking in the pre-war period. We take the liberty of mentioning the titles of a few of the planned topics: “Liberal Apostasy,” “Repercussions in the Collective Conscience of the Crisis of Materialist Civilization,” “The Psychology of Present-Day Anguish,” “Popular De-Christianization,” “Christian Ideals in Marxist Propaganda,” “The Marxist Concept of Life with Respect to Christian Civilization.” As can be seen, there is an abundant presence of the favorite topics of Personalist thinkers.

³¹ These debates were conducted by the French internationalist Prof. Albert de la Pradelle; “in the course of the discussion,” writes C. Santamaria, “there were Spanish participants who expressed themselves very freely concerning the authoritarian situation at the time in Spain” (Letter from C. Santamaria to Joseba Intxausti, 3 November 1983).

At the time, the Conversations of San Sebastian played a fundamental role in Spanish intellectual renewal. In a small-minded Spain, they became the privileged agora for the free interchange of ideas and projects. Present at the Conversations of 1947 were representatives of the following countries: Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Chile, Spain, France, Holland, Hungary, England, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, and the USA.³² “I attended the International Catholic Conversations in San Sebastian for the first time in 1949,” wrote J.L. Aranguren, “an undertaking carried out by Carlos Santamaria and whose importance for Spanish Catholicism has been enormous, considering that until then, Spain had been the victim of a new”Tibetization.”³³

We have paused to discuss the topic of the International Catholic Conversations because their influence was decisive in the development of Catholic social thought and because they have yet to be studied. It is true that Arizmendiarieta does not figure among the participants, but he is linked to them both through the Christian worker movement, whose most prominent representatives did participate, and, above all, through the Vitoria Seminary and the professors of its Social School. It is there that we find Arizmendiarieta during these years, where the shining star was Professor G.R. de Yurre. Nor should we forget that for several years, Arizmendiarieta had a close personal relationship, though not without tension, with Carlos Santamaria.³⁴ It is not unlikely that much of the dispersed material that is in the Arizmendiarieta Archive today—articles with no indication of author or origin, typed translations of lectures by foreign authors (J. Leclercq, etc.), which served him as valuable information and study material—came from these Conversations.³⁵

As evidence of the change which is occurring, in the late '40s, we see the first appearance of books in the Basque language since the war, which had been forbidden since the military occupation.³⁶

The oft-quoted F. Urbina writes the following concerning the self-critical intellectual movement which, beginning in the late '40s, even reaches the Second Vatican Council (1962): “But it can be said that at this level, as well as at the pastoral base, some of the fundamental impulses come as well from the effort at renovation during those years in Catholic Europe, particularly in France. That is when the great Catholic novelists began to be read: Bernanos, Mauriac, and Graham Green. The influence of philosophical-political thought, first of Maritain, and later of Mounier (...) widen the intellectual and spiritual panorama of the years just prior to the great Council.”³⁷ We think that it is also true, in Arizmendiarieta’s case, that this is the time when the influence of these thinkers begins to be felt profoundly, even though his knowledge of them indisputably dates from earlier. This is not due solely to the change in atmosphere. Arizmendiarieta himself has

³² *Memoria que la Junta de Conversaciones Católicas Internacionales de San Sebastián eleva al Excmo. Ayuntamiento de esta Ciudad* (unpublished, archive of C. Santamaria).

³³ Aranguren, J.L., *Memorias y esperanzas españolas*, Taurus, Madrid 1969, 75.

³⁴ The Arizmendiarieta Archive gives evidence of several services rendered by C. Santamaria to Arizmendiarieta with regard to dealings with the central administration, of conference addresses given by the former in Mondragon, etc., and, also of some differences between the two beginning in 1966.

³⁵ The problem for the moment is hard to resolve since neither the Arizmendiarieta nor the C. Santamaria archive have been organized or cataloged.

³⁶ Torrealdei, J.M., *Euskararen zapalkuntza (1936-1939)*, Jakin, Nr. 24, 1982, 573. ID., *Euskal idazleak gaur / Historia social de la lengua y literatura vascas*, Jakin/Caja Laboral Popular, Oñati 1977, 304ss.

³⁷ Urbina, F., op.cit., 64-65.

had a change in attitude during these years.

1.2 Years of Reflection and Study

Having finished his theological studies, Arizmendiarieta wanted to go to Lovaina to study sociology. The Apostolic Administrator of Vitoria, Monsignor Lauzurica, sent him to Mondragon. In his first five or six years, Arizmendiarieta reveals himself to be full of social concerns, preferring to be a man of action. His activity is surprising—in the face of any type of need, he seems obsessed with building organizations, whether they involve sport, public health, religion, education, or housing. His ability to come up with new ideas on the field of action seems unlimited. The doctrine, on the other hand, that he pours into his lectures and sermons, is the same that he received in his formative years in seminary. Only in a very limited sense could we speak of Arizmendiarieta's own philosophy at this point.

In 1945, Arizmendiarieta is thirty years old. A new period in his life is opening up, one which will evolve in the coming years. It will be a period of reflection and study.

In reality we should not think of the opening of this new stage as a break or an abrupt change. Arizmendiarieta is a man of decisive processes, but slow, almost imperceptible ones. He is more reflective than scholarly, yet he is constantly studying. He hammers on the need for study and continuing education and, among all his activity, never in his entire life did he abandon study. Let us review the history.

One of the first actions carried out by Arizmendiarieta in Mondragon was the organization of a youth library. In the Annual Report for 1941-1942 of the Youth Association of Catholic Action (Pr, I, 31-35), we learn that the Association in those years had a library endowed with 354 books, of which 140 are training books, in the circulating collection, as opposed to the in-house collection (Ib., 35)³⁸. Two years later, over 800 volumes are listed (Ib. 52), and in 1945, the total reaches a thousand (Ib. 64). This is the year a special library for the young women of Catholic Action is begun “with training books appropriate for them” (Ib. 84).

Study circles are organized around the library for youth. During 1943-1944, according to Arizmendiarieta, “the study circles were very busy. Average attendance was never less than fifty” (PR, I, 45). He adds that “the acceptance of the training books by the libraries of the Apprentice School of the Center for Catholic Action is constantly increasing” (Ib.). “The library averages a hundred readers per month” (Ib.52). A year later, “there was an average of forty readers per month for the year” (Ib. 64).

The organization of study groups for older people ran into some difficulties. Arizmendiarieta writes in 1945: “The training of a group of men

³⁸ In the Arizmendiarieta Archive we have found a list of training book titles available in May, 1942. Of the 410 books which are listed for that time, 37 titles pertain to sociology: Azpiazi, J. (*Property Law: Contemporary Social Problems*), Robinot-March, G. (*Confronting the Apostasy of the Masses*), Noguer, N. (*Church and State*), etc. Without doubt, these are the very books which were the basis of Arizmendiarieta's own sociological training. In later years, Arizmendiarieta recommended various readings on social topics to cooperators: Fourastie, M. Djilas, Wiener and Khan, etc. As for their moral and religious training, in a survey we did (1983) among the early cooperators, they were still able to recall the following recommended authors, marking three periods: a) Period from 1940-1950: Papini (*Christo, Gog*), Romano Guardini (*El Señor*), K. Adam, Tihamer Toth, P. Laburo, Guareschi; b) Period from 1950-1965: J. Leclercq (*God and Man, Christian Marriage*), Teilhard de Chardin (*The Divine Medium*), A. Carrel (*The Mystery of Man*), A. Fierro (*Faith against the System*) and especially Bernanos, Maritain, Mouniere; c) Period from 1965-1976: L. Evely (*A Religion for Our Time, Pathways to Happiness*), H. Fesquet (*Catholicism: A Religion for Tomorrow?*), H. Zahrnt (*God Cannot Die*), E. Schillebeeckx (*God, the Future of Man*), Miret Magdalena (*Catholicism for Tomorrow*), J.M. Gonzalez Ruiz (*To Believe is to Commit Yourself*), J. L. Aranguren (*Moral and Society*), L.J. Leuret, M. Quoit, H. Kung.

has begun. Young married men and others who have been discreetly chosen have been meeting for more than half a year. It now numbers around twenty. Women gathered in secret, coming also from the young women raised in Catholic Youth plus a few others. In this town, all this caution is indispensable because there is so much political sensitivity, which, thank God, has not made a dent in or been noticed in the Youth Branches” (Ib.84).

Of special interest is the founding, in June 1943, of a Social Academy or Academy of Sociology which Arizmendiarieta considers to be very important for the future. He ran this Academy himself. It meets every Monday, beginning with eight youth (Ib.40). A year later, attendance exceeds twenty (Ib.46). The objective of this Social Academy is “to train future worker leaders” (Ib.). Classes are an hour long and are organized in the following manner:

“[T]he first quarter hour is devoted to the reading of papers presented by those in attendance. They critique and comment on each other’s work, which is then archived.

There is a half hour of explanation of the topic lead by the chaplain, who follows the agreed-upon text which all present in their possession. The text is the “*Manual de Orientaciones Sociales*” by Pedro Villa Creus, S.J.³⁹

The last quarter hour is for information and the occasional commentary (PR,I,46).

Drawing from the Annual Report for 1943-1944: “The building of a worker section with a broad base has begun and, inspired by Catholic Action, having been named the delegated spokesman of Social Apostolate, which, with the collaboration of those in attendance at the Social Academy, is pursuing as its primary objective representation in this Academy of all factories, workshops, and even of diverse sections of factories, for the purpose of bringing together a compact bloc of all the young people of Mondragon who, in unity, will find the stimulus and the strength necessary to defend their economic, social, and moral interests. For now, its work will be limited to the formation of said social consciousness among the young people attending the Academy” (Ib.55).

Let us conclude with the following passage from the Annual Report for 1944-1945:

This Delegation was constituted to assure the development of the Academy of Social Studies, which was organized some two years ago. The delegate of the Social Apostolate, and those who serve at his pleasure, have promised the faithful attendance of a considerable number of young people at weekly study sessions which are held every Monday, from 8:30 to 9:30 in the meeting hall of the center. Some twenty young people have attended these meetings regularly, as has another group as well, but without the consistency of the first group.

³⁹ In 1955 (CAS, 234), he recommends for the study of social doctrine “the classic works of Llovera, Fallon, del P. Azpiazu, de Vila Creus, etc.”

A complete course of social orientation has been given, following the text of the *Manual de Social Orientation*, by Vila Creus. In the time devoted to each week's lesson, social problems have been discussed extensively, their history, their causes, property, characteristics of property, limitations, social justice, the demands of social justice, work, the dignity and prerogatives of labor, insurance, salary, subsidies, participation in profits and in management, the moral and material elevation of the work force, unions. In this same course, in all meetings, time has been devoted to the study of current problems, to their documentation, and even to the study of work rules.

The Academy has at its disposal a section of the library of the Center devoted exclusively to the social question. It has conducted some surveys on the sick, housing, etc.

Currently, the second course is under way, devoted to the study of social systems, and has already taken up the topics of liberalism, socialism, corporatism, national-socialism, and national-syndicalism.

In the works is the immediate subscription to several journals, both Spanish and foreign, to closely follow the entire social movement, in the hopes that several young people who have specialized in foreign languages can extract and summarize anything that might be interesting, and make it available to their classmates in the Academy. Today the Academy has a more energetic life than ever and has very interesting studies and plans in the planning stage."⁴⁰

The educational activity set in motion by Arizmendiarieta must have been truly incredible. "In the calculations we did in 1956," writes Ormaechea, "we counted more than two thousand study groups that he led. Some were for religious and human training; others, for social formation."⁴¹ This means that, at a minimum, Arizmendiarieta gave a lecture every 2.7 days for fifteen consecutive years, holidays and vacations included.

In addition, during these same years, Arizmendiarieta is a leader and teacher at the Professional School, which he himself founded in 1943⁴².

It is a classic saying that "you learn by teaching." And we see that between 1941 and 1945, Arizmendiarieta devotes himself intensely to social teaching, a task which he could not carry out without study. But what training did he himself have at this moment? Without doubt, Arizmendiarieta was still largely self-taught. His theoretical and conceptual framework seems quite limited, consisting basically of the philosophical-theological education from seminary, and Pontifical social doctrine. While it is true that his perception of the world and of the current crisis of values and ideas is informed by notable French writers—of whom he makes much use, at times verbatim—this does not necessarily imply direct and serious knowledge of them.

The very evolution of the classes he was teaching, with growing demands of a higher order, as well as the renewal of the intellectual climate which

⁴⁰ By this time, the library already had subscriptions to the journals *Ecclesia*, *Signo*, *Oye*, and *Jace* (PR, I, 64).

⁴¹ Ormaechea, J.M., "Una solución a tiempo para cada problema," *TU*, Nr. 190, nov.-dic. 1976, 31.

⁴² Arizmendiarieta undertook this work without any stipend whatsoever, as we learn in a letter dated March 23, 1949, from *don* Jose Luis Inarra to Mr. *don* Jose Maria Arrieta (Arizmendiarieta Archive). Every day, between 2:00 and 2:30pm, in the Professional School, Arizmendiarieta led an informal discussion on social and moral training which was attended by all the "student workers"—as he liked to call them—enrolled in the center. This went on until 1964, when their number—in 1960 it had climbed to a thousand—and the building of new facilities required a change of plan.

we noted at the end of the World War, moved him to undertake more study. And it seems that a certain disenchantment with pontifical social doctrine and, more generally, with his training as a priest, was not completely alien to this decision.⁴³

Arizmendiarieta's curriculum vitae, written personally by him, gives us the following schematic of his studies: "Philosophy and Theology in the Vitoria Seminary. Ethical-Social Studies in the University of Comillas, enrolled in special and intensive courses. Economics in intensive courses in the Social School of Vitoria-Malaga, 1949-1952."⁴⁴ A few lines later, he lists among the positions he has held: "Subdirector of the Social School of Vitoria, 1954 -1954."

The ethical-social studies to which the curriculum refers, must have been undertaken in the summer of 1940.⁴⁵ Likely he had studied on his own—or perhaps in regular seminary classes—Christian social doctrine, of which he had a deep and detailed knowledge. But there came a moment when such ethical-social studies must have seemed insufficient to him, and he decided to approach the social question no longer only from the point of view of unchanging principles, but more realistically and at closer range by studying economics.

The following words, written years later in a letter to the Auxiliary Bishop of San Sebastian, Mons. D. Jose Maria Setien, could well be a reflection of his sense of unease:

Perhaps it is not out of place to observe that it would be better for us were we to devote more time to studying socio-economic reality, perhaps a part of the time that we devote to scholarly tangents. In any case in order to approach and know these realities, purely logical, conceptual, and abstract resources and methods are not sufficient. And, of course, we have such realities very close at hand provided we are able to descend to another level of "vulgarity" from the Olympus of beautiful dreams and inaccessible ideals to which our clerical training accustomed us."⁴⁶

In fact, among the old books, one of the most worn out and dog-eared in Arizmendiarieta's library, we find F.V. Kleinwachter, *Political Economy*, published by G. Gili in 1946, full of marginal notes in small handwriting, not always easy to read. This could well have been the book with which Arizmendiarieta began his study of economics,⁴⁷ possibly as preparation for classes at the Social School of Vitoria. A curious note: where Kleinwachter says "the representatives of pure socialism totally reject private property" (p. 209), Arizmendiarieta erases and corrects to "the representatives of communism." We cannot now dwell on the many underlinings and marginal notes with which Arizmendiarieta has enriched the manual. But we do permit ourselves a single observation. In later writings of Arizmendiarieta, we find an interpretation of the history of humanity which, echoing

⁴³ Through some of his later statements we learn that he judged that training harshly cf. Larranaga, J., op. cit., 23, 28,65. "They gave me scholastic training, and I realized that it was just a formula, a lifeless element."(72).

⁴⁴ Curriculum vitae of 16 January 1971, prepared by Arizmendiarieta for the Press Office of the Prime Minister (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

⁴⁵ In the Arizmendiarieta Archive we find the following diploma: "Pontifical University of Comillas. Academy of Sociology. D. Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta has brilliantly passed the Sociology Shortcourse, held at this university, during the summer, 1940. (Signed) Joaquin Azpiazu, S.J, Director. It bears no date. Note that Arizmendiarieta in his curriculum does not designate [these courses] simply as sociological studies, but rather as ethical-social, not an infrequent term for Christian social doctrine.

⁴⁶ Letter from Arizmendiarieta to D. Jose Maria Setien, 8 November 1974 (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

⁴⁷ Naturally, in his library there are other books on economics, but (of those that are still there) all are published later and none shows such intensive use. We also find in the Arizmendiarieta Archive, with signs of abundant use, photocopied economics texts used in the courses of the Social School of Vitoria.

Hegel and Marx, conceives of humanity as a process in three phases of the development of cooperation: a first phase of cooperation by force, a second phase of cooperation by necessity (brought about, apparently, by the machine) and a third phase which opens from the present toward the future, of cooperation in freedom. This view of history—which we will develop in due course—centering around the concept of work and considering all work to be essentially cooperative, appears for the first time as a marginal handwritten note in the book in question. The following sentence of Kleinwachter seems to have given rise to Arizmendiarieta’s development of his own thought: “The great constructions of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians show what cooperation imposed by force is capable of” (p. 180). In Kleinwachter, the term “cooperation” means “in common” and in no way has the deeper meaning which Arizmendiarieta finds in it (rather, it is the other way around), nor does it appear again in discussion of the concept of the business firm (pp. 179-184).

Also we most note that, in the chapter on the cooperative enterprise in the same book, we find little underlining by Arizmendiarieta, and not one marginal note. If this should be interpreted as an indication that Arizmendiarieta during these years was not especially interested in the subject of cooperatives, we would have to conclude that the primary interest of Arizmendiarieta lay not simply in a list of principles, but also in actual cooperation. Only in a secondary and derivative manner did he become interested in what is known as the cooperative enterprise.

These ideas will take time to bear fruit.⁴⁸ It is clear that during these years, Arizmendiarieta studies, analyzes, and observes, looking for opportunities everywhere. It is a period of reflection and searching. Perhaps we need to apply to the ideas which we see arising now among underlinings and marginal notes what Arizmendiarieta himself will eventually declare to J. Larrañaga about ideas he heard from his professors in seminary (such as, work ennobles man) and of which he will only much later become conscious: “But awareness is like a seed. How can one imagine that an oak tree can be born of an acorn?”⁴⁹

During the period of the late forties and the early fifties, which would see the creation of the first cooperative, we find Arizmendiarieta devoted to his studies. He maintains close contact with the Vitoria Seminary, attending the classes organized there by the Social School year after year. His interests range from economics and sociology to philosophy and pedagogy. Still, at the same time, this is a period of great activity in the training of youth, and of contact with social reality.

Arizmendiarieta not only studies, he also observes and analyzes; and he does not study alone, but rather jointly with groups of young people. Unlike Pallas Athena, the cooperative experience of Mondragon was not born full

⁴⁸ *Das Kapital*, beginning with Chapter 11, Section IV, Book I, will facilitate the full later development of these ideas. On the other hand, we should not forget that V. Kleinwachter himself simply repeats the end of the same chapter of K. Marx, cf. *Das Kapital*, D. Kiepenheuer, Berlin 1932, 320-322.

⁴⁹ Larranaga, J., op cit., 28.

blown from the head of a sovereign Jupiter, but from the joint reflection and common study of a group of workers led by Arizmendiarieta.⁵⁰ “I try to learn directly,” he declares in his curriculum vitae, “the socio-economic realities of the region, cultivating and maintaining a relationship with its protagonists, without regard to their ideological or social status.”⁵¹

1.2 Worker emancipation: self-emancipation

Arizmendiarieta did not intend to emancipate the workers. He wanted the workers to emancipate themselves.

As we have already seen, Arizmendiarieta tried from the beginning to imprint a clearly social slant on Catholic Action of Mondragon. In doing so, he separated himself in no small measure from the general tendency of the hierarchy, not only because of its spirit of submission to the State, but following pontifical guidelines, he preferred during those years to see CA become a purely spiritual movement, far removed from any political or labor commitment.

Decisive for this orientation were the serious incidents which the Italian Church had had with Mussolini, who accused Catholic Action of subversive activities, and which led in the end to the official condemnation of fascism by Pius XI in 1931.⁵² The Church would end up backtracking. Only by giving up the public life of Catholic Action and by leaving all social activity to fascist organizations did the Church avoid a break between the State and the Church.⁵³ Beginning then, it would insist that the proper role of this lay institution is of a purely spiritual character, the expansion of the kingdom of God. It should not meddle in social causes. It is only after the defeat of fascism that the Vatican would attempt to restart Catholic Action as a truly socially active movement, in good part in order to confront the communist threat, which did not give Pius XII a moment’s rest.

Under Franco, Spanish Catholic Action, under the direction of Mons. Zacarias Vizcarra, adopted the same spiritual attitude as its Italian counterpart.⁵⁴ But this was more the result of its own lack of initiative than because of demands imposed by the regime. Franco would give it the special task of “re-Christianizing” society and of restoring the country with a notion of “victorious Christianity”:⁵⁵ exercises, mission work, retreats, etc. would be the means by which Catholic Action would support this goal, as has already been explained elsewhere. “Under current circumstances in Spain,” wrote *Ecclesia* in an editorial in its first issue, “intensive work by Catholic Action is more necessary than ever. We have received a sad anti-Catholic inheritance, a legacy of liberalism and Marxism. A large segment of the Spanish people has been systematically de-Christianized. It is necessary to re-Christianize it, in order not to fall into the same dreadful tragedy again. The instrument of providence to help the Church and the State in

⁵⁰ Ornelas, C., *Producer Cooperatives and Schooling: The Case of Mondragon, Spain*, 1980, 76, (unpublished, CLP Archive) has expressed it perfectly as a statement of J.M. Mancisidor to the author: “Not only did Mondragon find D. Jose Maria, but D. Jose Maria also found Mondragon. It was like a perfect marriage.”

⁵¹ Formal and normative study in Lovaina, writes J. Larranaga, op. cit., 71, was cut off abruptly for D. Jose Maria by the Monsignor. But what he did not manage to draw from teachers and books, he more than made up for with what he drew from observing social life.” A favorite phrase from Arizmendiarieta’s own mouth, an expression of his critical attitude toward sterile scholasticism and academics, was that, more than in books, one must study first and foremost “in the great book of the world,” or, “in the great book of life.” It should be remembered that this is a crucial expression of R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, I, Alfaguara, Madrid 1981, 9, which marks the definitive break between scholastic philosophy and the beginning of modern philosophy: “I completely gave up academic study and decided not to search for knowledge anywhere (...) except in the great book of the world,” etc.

⁵² Alix, Ch., *Le Saint-Siège et le nationalisme en Europe (1870-1960)*, Sirey, Paris 1962, 275.

⁵³ Libertini, L., “La politique du Vatican sous le règne de Pie XII,” *Les Temps Modernes*, Nr. 155, janvier 1959, 1134.

⁵⁴ Urbina, F., op. cit., 19-21.

⁵⁵ *Ib.* 21.

this enormous task of re-Christianization is Catholic Action.”⁵⁶

Right from the beginning, Arizmendiarieta demonstrates a very different view of the work of Catholic Action.⁵⁷ It is not that he opposed the workers’ exercises and retreats, although it seems that he did not always agree with the way they were organized and carried out.^[^ch2-59] But above all, he attempts to organize youth⁵⁸, and he tries to instill in them a strong social conscience, so that they become an instrument both of reconciliation and of worker emancipation, not avoiding temporal commitments, but rather, confronting them decisively in all areas.

[ch2-59]: There is correspondence in the Arizmendiarieta Archive from fall 1944 concerning a conflict on this issue with the House of Spiritual Exercises of Loyola. Apparently, Arizmendiarieta had described the Exercises of that House as a “business.” After that, with communication broken down, Arizmendiarieta sent the Mondragon workers to Begona.

“The mission of Catholic Action, an organ of Catholic teaching and a providential instrument in whose effectiveness the Pope has trust, is to train men with a social spirit and awareness, capable of winning the trust of the masses, and at the same time, of promoting all social projects suitable for achieving the elevation of the proletariat, for which the Pope is calling. As of today, we do not have those men, or we do not have them in adequate proportion and number. Thus, as of today, we cannot harvest abundant fruit. Our action will be slow and it will take time to produce results. That should not concern us. Rather we should fulfill our mission in such a way as never to be branded as unfaithful to it. In order to carry out this mission, Catholic Action must endeavor to give its members broad social training, both theoretical and practical, which leads them to action consonant with circumstances and with necessities.”⁵⁹

Arizmendiarieta understands his own role as a board member of Catholic Action to be that of encourager and, above all, educator.⁶⁰ [I know that I came across “consiliario” before. Check to see if I rendered it as board member then, which I think fits best rvb] He is decidedly against, as has been stated, the naming of factory chaplains (CAS, 135), an initiative launched by Mons. Lauzurica that created chaplaincies in the most important firms of Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya.⁶¹ And his brief experience as a labor religious advisor⁶² will end as a disappointment. Although we do not know the precise date, Arizmendiarieta must have been named labor religious advisor some time after March 1949.⁶³

Before the year is out Arizmendiarieta will tender his resignation from this position in the following terms:

Yesterday, I was at the Provincial Delegation of Labor Unions of San Sebastian and I would have liked to speak with you, but it was not possible because I was

⁵⁶ Ecclesia, Nr. 1, January 1941

⁵⁷ See PR, I, 10-94 and the entire volume of CAS.

⁵⁸ This will also lead to several problems for him, such as the prohibition by the Clergy of Saint Viator to organize within Catholic Action the youth of the Saint Joseph’s High School, because “in this school, a Eucharistic Crusade is organized.” Furthermore, he is warned in a surly tone that “it is not within the competence of an organization outside the *Colegio* to get involved within it.” Letter from X. X. (we omit the name), Clergy of Saint Viator, Colegio de S. José-Mondragon, to D. José María Arizmendiarieta, 19 October 1943 (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

⁵⁹ CAS, 19. Lecture given to the directors of J.A.C. of Guizpuzcoa, Villa Santa Teresa (San Sebastian), August, 1945.

⁶⁰ See: “The Priest and the Coach and Their Respective Role in the Promotion of Works of Social Assistance” (CAS, 131-150); “Professional Worker Training and the Mission of the Priest in the Apprentice Schools” (Ib., 151-162); “Concerning Social Ministry” (Ib., 189-198); “The Active Presence of the Priest” (Ib., 207-216); “Social action, a Talk to Priests” (Ib. 223-230).

⁶¹ Rodríguez de Coro, F., *Colonización política del catolicismo*, CAP, San Sebastián 1979, 358-359.

⁶² Regarding the ecclesiastical advising of labor unions, see RODRIGUEZ DE CORO, F., op. cit., 359-360; BELDA, R., “La Iglesia y el sindicalismo vertical,” in: *Iglesia y Sociedad en España 1939-1975*, Ed. Popular, Madrid 1977, 219. Keep in mind that we are dealing with vertical, Francoist, labor unions.

⁶³ D. José María Arrieta Miner, Ecclesiastical Advisor of the Provincial Delegation of Labor Unions of Guipuzcoa, in a letter dated 18 March 1949, asks the parish priest of Mondragon D. J. L Iñarra to name a priest who could serve as Regional Advisor: “His task would be to undertake social-moral work among the workers: handing out propaganda folders and leaflets, inviting them to and facilitating religious retreats and lectures at opportune moments. These tasks will be remunerated, albeit for the time being, modestly.” In his reply on 23 March, the parish priest recommends Arizmendiarieta for this task, noting that as a condition of his acceptance, Arizmendiarieta’s services will be religious and moral in character and free of charge (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

awaiting an interview with *Don* Jesus Los Santos and finally I had to return without speaking to him. I was able to meet with *D. Jose Sanchez* and I regret that we could not come to an understanding. It is clear that very narrow and poorly justifiable criteria, from the point of view of an authentic and integral sense of social and distributive justice, are still in force. I believe that a good-faith collaboration with these organizations is not viable. Perhaps I was under illusions, but the fact is that, today, the impression weighs on me that there is nothing more to do. Or rather, the best social work that can be done is to counter them, as long as it can be done discretely. You and all who know me know that I have been an enemy of negative and destructive attitudes and that I have a rule of not judging things a priori, but as they occur, with a view to their effectiveness and their rectitude. And it is precisely this point of view which forces me today to adjust my thinking about these organizations. The truth is that I am resistant to this decision, because I can see that at the moment there is no immediate possibility of doing anything else positive. But the reality of the facts overcomes my own desires. On principle, starting today, I want you to consider finding someone else if you intend to move forward with some of your plans concerning religious advisors. I have taken all I can take, and prefer to be out. In that way, I will be better able to serve the workers, and I will be closer to them, who today are more abandoned than ever, even though it is precisely this abandonment that is building up a wonderful solidarity among them, as we can see every day in a thousand details.

I know well that I am leaving myself open to charges of exaggerating my position, but I prefer to run any risk in order to remain faithful to my conscience and to my mission as a priest. I have never given in to risks because neither have I sought personal advantage. When I became a priest, I had the good fortune to embrace a life completely consecrated to an ideal, and I want to live it without further considerations.

One more thing: one cannot serve two masters, and even if all things were equally good, I would prefer to serve the most needy and lowly. And in view of certain matters, I have no doubts concerning my current position.

There is nothing more, dear *D. Jose Maria*. Do as you see fit, and you know that you will have in me a priest ready to serve the cause of the defenseless and needy. Yours sincerely,⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Letter from Arizmendiarieta to *D. Jose Maria Arrieta*, 11 February 1950 (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

Between the years 1945 and 1955, Arizmendiarieta was extremely active giving classes and lectures on social training, not only in Mondragon, but in the entire province and even outside the diocese. He spoke to young people and to the leadership of the J.A.C., to workers, to technicians, and to business owners, as well as to priests and to council members. He also participated in several National Assemblies. But he does not limit himself to just words. "It is not enough to teach or to preach the truth. Someone once said that the banner of truth which we Christians raise on high is a testament to our negligence and apathy if we do not turn it into reality. For this reason, our works must be an expression and testimony of our love of truth and justice..." (CAS, 143).

Years pass, and Arizmendiarieta hopes that at long last, deeds will be born of words. He does not want talk without action. His overwhelming impression—that all the classes and conferences are, in the end, just talk, because no one wants or knows how to do anything—will lead him to withdraw from this field of action as well, to concentrate on building something real and positive, something concrete, in his own Mondragon. Thus, in 1956, the first cooperative is born. The Arizmendiarieta Archive preserves a great deal of material that illustrates his progressive disenchantment. We will limit ourselves to reproducing a letter to D. Jose Arrue, on the occasion of his being named to the board of the male division of Catholic Action of Guipuzcoa:

I received your kind letter of the 19th of this month, and first and foremost, let me congratulate you on your recent nomination to the difficult position of Councilor of Catholic Action, Men's Division, with which I work in social ministry, and which has left me with gray hair. We have a good roster of men, some well-seasoned and others in a period of gaining maturity. They have all been able to meet the demands of their respective consciences and rise to the level of circumstances. More than once I have been edified by their spirit of sacrifice and Christian brotherhood. In truth, so far, we have had no need to formalize this solidarity in an official constitution and with lapel pins of the Masculine [Male?] Branch of Catholic Action. If it is necessary, we will do so.

Having said this, I do not want to skip over some ideas which constitute a barrier in my mind. And I am going to explain them clearly to you, as has always been my custom: with my name and surname. In our eagerness to organize, we attempt to organize teams of activists to perform sincerely and loyalty in the field of social ministry, or to "play worker." I warn that men get tired of responding over and over again to our calls. The simple listing and proclaiming of doctrine contained in pontifical documents has little persuasive force, as long as men do not see more determination and solidarity to put it into action among those who call ourselves Christians, whether as shepherds or members of the flock. I observe that the doctrine is now well enough known that, without much critical sense, our bourgeois spirituality and our insincerity are revealed.

I recognize that the real problems are very complex, but not so much so that those of us who bear responsibility for the souls of the present generation should be giving the impression that firm steps forward cannot be taken yet in this life, or not until profound changes occur in the current conditions of human existence. Let's study the problems, let's address them, let's agree on something, and once we have decided to confront some real problem, that is when we should gather our sheep. But first we should be sure our own thought and action is in order. We must study and be clear about the goals of our Catholic Action, of our Hoac. I am referring to Guipuzcoa, to every town, and I would ask the same thing of each priest, of each council member. As to the answers we would receive, do you think there would be the most indispensable unanimity?

Returning to the subject of the letter, I will say that a representation of ours can go to said retreat week, but I do not see the necessity of creating

any new “section” since a firm agenda may be sufficient to give the group cohesion. Perhaps patches, buttons, and rules will only serve to divide people. Is it not true that it is more critical to live out Christian principles than to brandish them for external effect? In any case, as for myself, I will do what I am ordered to do, and meanwhile I will continue to trust that good sense will prevail so that realities will matter more to us than simple appearances, and solidarity in ideas and feelings more than insignias and bright colors.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Letter from Arizmendiarieta to D. Jose Arrue, 21 June 1957 (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

The preceding lines might cause the impression that for Arizmendiarieta, practice might have been the cause for his disenchantment with theory. Nothing could be further from the truth. Arizmendiarieta, while recognizing the need for long years of training and study, made it clear from the beginning that study should not end with itself, but rather open itself in appropriate ways to social practice.

What he never thought is that said social practice should be the work of priests and councillors, as training might well be (CAS, 226-228). In his judgment, training should consist precisely in the complete empowerment of workers to act on their own. It should be they, the workers, who decide –once they are solidly trained– which fields and forms of work they judge most suitable. The worker cannot be emancipated; only he can and must emancipate himself.

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