

1.4 Difficult Propaganda

In his effort to educate and spread ideas through society, Arizmendiarieta did not limit himself to study groups and to lectures and sermons. He tried to make use of all media within his grasp, and the former war journalist in the daily *Eguna* was quite aware of the power of the press. “There is one lever of power,” he wrote, “whose effectiveness is not always taken into account, and this is the effectiveness of well trained and well informed minds. I refer to public opinion. A duly channeled current of public opinion is so powerful and effective that no one, or very few, can resist it.” But for that to happen, public opinion must be appropriately created” (CAS, 222).

Nevertheless, Arizmendiarieta lacked a press which could serve as his platform. He had to create one himself, and in the '40s, it was not easy to be a journalist “on your own.”¹ See the following letter (1947) from Arizmendiarieta to the Honorable Alberto Bonet:

“I would not have wanted to bother you regarding a matter of such little substance, but I cannot manage to make any progress without calling on someone. You are the victim of my mania for venting about an issue.

We were publishing a pamphlet entitled *Aleluya*, which was suspended for lack of authorization. In the seventeen issues we published, they found nothing censurable, but we were publishing with ecclesiastical authorization without worrying about anything else. We appealed to the governor for the authorization. After a year of waiting, we had nice promises and nothing more. Finally, this Christmas, we put out the same pamphlet with the title *Equis*. Nobody said anything to us. But neither have we dared to continue to tempt fate, because we were open to being taken the wrong way. Once again, we insisted, and this time they authorized a single issue, “because the Spanish market is poorly supplied with paper.” Before distribution we had to submit it to censorship. How curious! We waited for the submitted copy to be returned to us, and after more than a week it did not arrive, so we did the distribution. Nothing has happened.

We now have a complete plan of action and of publicity throughout the village, and in order to move forward we need an organ of information and contact, modest and simple, but capable of explaining everything which must be explained in order to motivate the masses a bit. I am sending you the issues which I have on hand so that you can get an idea of the object we are pursuing. We think that the time is not yet ripe to propose the idea of constituting a new entity. Before taking that step, we want to warrant our best elements as a credit to the people, and we want to congregate the workers around concrete, defined objectives. In this matter, publicity which stays in the lofty area of principles will not be of interest at this time. And the application of principles, the firming up of objectives always brings on greater difficulties, above all within privileged classes and people. There's no problem in stating general principles, but carrying out the practical purposes contained within them immediately incites the apostles of prudence and discretion.

¹ Abellan, M.L., *Censura y creación literaria en España (1939-1976)*, Península, Barcelona 1980. GUBERN, R., *La Censura. Función política y ordenamiento jurídico bajo el franquismo (1936-1975)*, Península Barcelona 1980.

I think that here, even when they grant authorization, they will do so reluctantly. I know those who get involved in these matters, and they even see politics in soup, or they are suspicious of everyone. That is why I remembered X.X.,² but it seemed more prudent to turn to you first and to abide by your advice. If you should feel it advisable, I will be happy to contact him to resolve this matter once and for all. So, I hope that you will be so kind as to advise me as to how to proceed.

I am reading *TU*. What I fear is that all these matters will fall on deaf ears. The attitude of many people seems stranger every day, and every day I understand some things even less. Perhaps I will have occasion to greet you at the end of April, since there is going to be an Assembly of Professional Education and His Honor the Bishop has expressed to me his desire that I attend. I will go with little hope, for I believe that there is very little sense of justice in many spheres.”³

Difficulties and censorship did not come only from the government. Already in this letter there is allusion to “privileged classes and people” which seem to have begun to feel annoyed by Arizmendiarieta’s work. As the social movement was taking shape around Arizmendiarieta, there were no doubt in Mondragon those who felt they had a reason to feel their authority was being undermined or their positions threatened. Once more it is Arizmendiarieta himself who will describe it in all its detail:

“Just today we had a small, but unpleasant, incident which, because of the way it got blown out of proportion, has provoked much comment. It is not the first time and will likely not be the last, if some people do not learn to understand things better. I will explain the facts to you.

During these eleven years that I have been serving as a councilor of Youth and Men of Catholic Action, we have published several pamphlets, some mimeographed, some printed, etc., for the purpose of maintaining communication with youth who are absent, of carrying out other social campaigns, of promoting some ministry programs, and even to train youth in the handling of the pen [journalism] by offering them the chance to work. Some of these pamphlets we called *Aleluya*, others *Equis*, others *Despertar*, etc. Some were circulated privately and others were flyers. When they were given to the public, generally we gave them to the censors, and of course they were inspired by a constructive spirit. In testimony, we can offer the entire collection which we have in our archives. A few times, people with bad intentions have tried to see political intentions in us, and we were even turned in once or twice. Recently, we had to call on His Excellency, Governor Baron de Benasque to protest the bothersome interference of one individual or another, and we made a clear declaration of everything to the Police Commissioner. After that interference, we have had peace to the present day.

A month ago, which is to say, around February first, we posted a few type-written sheets entitled *Echoes* on the bulletin board in a room in the Center of Catholic Action. It was a sort of “broadsheet” newspaper to be read by those who come to the Center. The Center serves as the social hall not just for the Men’s Branch of Catholic Action, but also for the Marian Congregation of Saint Louis congregation, the Sporting Youth of Mondragon, and even

² We omit the name.

³ Letter from Arizmendiarieta to the Honorable Alberto Bonet, Madrid, 20 March 1947 (Arizmendiarieta Archive). Do not confuse the journal *TU*, of the JOC, to which this text refers with the one which Arizmendiarieta will found in 1960 with the name *Cooperation*, and which, after 1964, will also be called *TU - Trabajo y Union*.

for the Education and Culture League. In the first editorial, the purpose was explained. A mailbox was placed along with the sheets and beneath them so that people could leave articles and questions. As you can see, it was quite a modest endeavor, private in nature, without public circulation and in our own center. As well, you can see in the copies which I include for you, everything was thought out according to a constructive plan.

At midday yesterday our mayor Mr. X.X.,⁴ who also frequents the Center, learned that those sheets were posted. He got angry because he had not been told about them. He spoke in strong language against the Board and the Center, criticizing that kind of action. When I was informed by a member of the Board who was present for all this, I wrote a letter that afternoon saying simply that he was giving too much importance to the matter, that that publication, which did not go beyond a completely private matter and which was posted on the premises of Catholic Action, did not need special authorization, but in any case I could give him all the information he wanted if he needed it in order to understand the situation.

We don't know what happened after that. This morning the civil guard pulled the sheets as well as the mailbox off the bulletin board. Then they called the headquarters of the President of the Board of the Center, and of the Youth Group, as well as the custodian. I did not have to go because they could not find me, since I was going from school to school. As you can see, today at noon there was more than a little alarm around here.

I am explaining all this to you and am sending you copies so that you can tell us what we are to do in view of this. I do not think we can continue at the expense of the ill feelings of some people. But, on the other hand, we know each other well enough so that more understanding and spirit of cooperation can exist among us. All this has repercussions among the people. We work so hard to gain their collaboration and interest and then, in one day, everything falls apart since the reaction of many is that nothing can be done when these public examples of intolerance and interference occur. If I thought that everything was going to end here I would not have been so forward as to take the liberty to address you, distracting your attention. But, I know from experience what some people are capable of when they start to put up roadblocks.”⁵

We now know the starting point of Arizmendiarieta's own thought, his awareness of the total crisis of a civilization. An old world is dying; it is necessary to build a new one.

“Bourgeois individualism is dead,” said Maritain.⁶ “Five centuries of history are teetering,” Mounier continued. “We are witnessing the collapse of a zone of civilization born at the end of the Middle Ages, both consolidated and undermined by the industrial era, capitalist in its structure, liberal in its ideology, bourgeois in its ethics.”⁷

“A new civilization, a new man,” demanded Mouniere.⁸ A new humanism, Maritain⁹: “Europe aspires to a new civilization (...) to an order in which each human being can enjoy social as well as political liberty, and the working classes can achieve their greatest historical moment.”¹⁰

⁴ We omit the name.

⁵ Letter from Arizmendiarieta to the Honorable Tomas Garicano Goni, Civil Governor of Guipuzcoa, 5 March 1952 (Arizmendiarieta Archive). Among the many media used by Arizmendiarieta to get his ideas out must be listed the creation of a local “Parish Radio Station” as part of the Professional School. Beginning in 1957 and up to the mid sixties, it was under the direction of E. Illarramendi. ***** ##### 2. The Foundations of Any Human Order

⁶ Maritain, J., *La educación en este momento crucial*, Desclée de Brouwer, Buenos Aires 1950, 149. On p. 184: “Manchesterian liberalism is good and dead.”

⁷ Mounier, E., *Manifiesto al servicio del personalismo*, Taurus, Madrid 1972, 13.

⁸ *Ib.* 15.

⁹ Maritain, J., *op. cit.*, 149.

¹⁰ *Ib.* 184.

We must begin right now, Arizmendiarieta will say, the construction of this new order to which we aspire, doing now what is possible now, while continuing to fight for that which can only become reality in the future. The new order, if it wishes to be human, will need to be pluralistic, a wide-open field of freedom.¹¹ But whatever form it may take, it must rest upon the foundation of education, work, and the recognition of the dignity of man.

¹¹ Maritain, J., *Humanisme intégral*, Aubier, Paris 1968, 169.

In our view, these were Arizmendiarieta's central ideas, or guiding ideas [*ideas fuerzas*], as he will take to calling them, in his effort to train young workers. In the development of these three building blocks of any human order—in our case that of the cooperative movement—Arizmendiarieta shows himself to be deeply personalist. Mouniere recognized that in his own conception of the personalist order he had taken French reality as a foundation. “Let other national temperaments,” he declared, “find the same inspiration in forms more appropriate to their own temperament, on different human and institutional material.”¹² Arizmendiarieta will build on Basque reality, and more concretely, on the reality of Mondragon in the '40s and '50s.

¹² Mounier, E., op. cit., 91-92.

2.1 Dignity of the Person

Mounier, in his critique of naturalism, will, in fact, make use of a quote from Marx: “Man is a natural being, but he is a human natural being.”¹³ A long tradition in Western culture has considered man to be on the highest rung of the ladder of creatures in nature, on the very tip of it, even rising above it. Beyond him, the infinite space of the divine opens up. Mankind finds itself between nature and the divine, partially freed from nature, and at the same time chained to it, overcoming it in its titanic effort to ascend through sheer willpower and the lightning bolts of his intelligence. In this view, both Judeo-Christian roots and the classical Greek thought, myth and philosophy converge in various ways.

¹³ Mounier, E., *Le personalisme*, PUF, Paris 1978, 18.

The eternal tension implicit in this concept of man, between angel and beast, is evident throughout the history of thought, according to whichever tendency is preferred. On the one hand, the idealist danger of “angelism” is manifest from Plato to Hegel, which Feuerbach will brandish energetically, lauding the originality of man with respect to the rest of the universe, his freedom of spirit, his ideas and beliefs, his conscience, and his creative will. On the other hand, from Calicles to Nietzsche, there are no fewer dangers in defining man in purely natural terms, completely lacking in any higher order of values, thrust into the dark realm of his animal roots, a violent mass without spirit, governed by the fateful rules of the flock or the herd, with no principles beyond instincts and the law of the strongest. “Because the preface”—warns Maritain—“or the beginning of fascism and of Nazism

is ignorance of the spiritual dignity of man, and the theory that human life and morality are regulated by purely material or biological values.”¹⁴

The personalist current comes down decidedly in the line of transcendent humanism, of the man who overcomes man,¹⁵ thus overcoming the limits of his will and his own reason. For the Personalists, each man, open to the absolute, is himself an absolute. He is not a passing moment in time. He is not part of a whole (social or natural) into which he is absorbed. “The person,” says Mounier in words that Arizmendiarieta has underlined in his reading, “is an absolute with respect to any other material or social reality, or any other human being. He can never be considered as part of a collective; family, class, state, nation, humanity. No other person, certainly no collective, can legitimately consider him as a means to an end. God himself, in Christian doctrine, respects his freedom, although he may breath life into him from within.”¹⁶

Both Maritain and Mounier severely criticized Marxism for not recognizing, even denying, this transcendent human dimension and its absolute value. Arizmendiarieta, within a different context, seems not to have felt the need to make the same criticism, no doubt more in tune to the Marxism of the workers in his own surroundings, with whom he hoped to connect, than to academic and doctrinaire Marxism. When he highlights the dignity of man (his inviolate freedom, etc.) his criticism points rather toward the all-encompassing State, capitalism, and the apathy of consciences, which he intends to shake up and move to action. For the same reason, for Arizmendiarieta, human dignity is not so much something which one possesses and which others must respect, as it is something which each person must achieve and impose on social reality. Man must be aware of the dignity which, by rights, is due to him. But it is worth nothing if he is then unable to bring about an order built on the demands and requirements of dignity. Human dignity, in his thinking, as much or even more than a principle, is an objective to be attained.

Defining man as in tension between what he is, in fact, and that which by his own effort he can become, Arizmendiarieta begins with the premise that current humanity, engulfed in crisis, is a “monster,” acting and thinking as such. But, unlike animals, men are skillful and open to change and can transform their environment and, by doing so, transform themselves.

Mondragon has a popular legend, mythically associated with the name and coat of arms of the town, of a violent dragon which devoured all it encountered, people and livestock, terrorizing the region.¹⁷ Although generally not a friend of literary devices, on this occasion Arizmendiarieta made use of the following allegory to express his thought:

“Once upon a time there was a fairy who was condemned to appear, at

¹⁴ Maritain, J., *La educación*, 190.

¹⁵ Pascal, *Pensées*, Nr. 434.

¹⁶ Mounier, E., *Manifest*, 60. “The word ‘absolute’ here can cause us confusion,” Mounier writes in another place. “The person is, through the creative will of God, an absolute, insofar as, through his model and through the ontological perfection that he is called to realize fully beyond time, he is ‘the most perfect creation in nature,’ a perfection which the life of grace elevates as well to the infinite. It is such that, not only can nothing in nature prevail against it, but also that God himself, having refined it and having made it potentially one with Him, is linked through his creation, through his Redemption, and He can neither destroy him nor treat him in any fashion but as a person. But this [personhood] is not an absolute in the sense that its prominence is free of all conditions of servitude, of time and place, and is called upon to meet, immediately and unconditionally, its full potential. Mankind is situated, ontologically and historically, in a situation which forms part of its very definition, as well as of his ultimate potential. Customs, politics, and thus a Personalist anthropology, can only be identified in reference to this situation, outside of which we abandon the real and, with it, usefulness. In this way, the concrete existence of the person is characterized in a double entry: his ontological character and his historical character” (ib. 278). Concerning the critique of Blondel of the “absolute” character of personhood recognized by personalism, and the polemic caused by his critique, cf. Nedoncelle, M, Maurice Blondel et les équivoques du personalisme, en: *Explorations personalistes*, Aubier, Paris 1970, 251-261. [This note was torture, and really needs to be reviewed by a theologian or a philosopher.]

¹⁷ Letona, J. – Leibar, J., *Mondragón*, Caja de Ahorros Municipal de San Sebastián 1970, 27-28. URANGA, J.M., *Mondragón, trayectoria y anecdotario*, Caja de Ahorros Municipal de San Sebastián, 1970, 23-24.

certain times, in the form of an ugly, poisonous snake. Anyone who treated her badly during her "serpent" moments was immediately and forever excluded from her blessings. Nevertheless, to those few who, despite everything, never quit loving her, protecting her, and pitying her while she was a "serpent" she appeared again in all her unearthly beauty and made them the beneficiaries of all her blessings, favors and kindnesses. It must be hard to see in this beautiful fairy, condemned to appear at certain times as a repugnant serpent, any man, youth or child who does not enjoy a minimum level of spiritual and material assistance the lack of which impedes the development and the cultivation of the most beautiful and noble virtues and which encourages the appearance of the lowest and most base instincts. Let us not forget that all men, of whatever class or condition, bear the mark of the divine, which makes them worthy of all consideration and which, if they are treated as they deserve, will not fail to become beings full of goodness, understanding, and virtue. And we will all benefit" (EP, I, 89; Cf. CAS, 197-198)

2.2 Education

We begin by insisting, once again, that Arizmendiarieta fits in well with Basque social tradition. Since Meabe and Madiabeitia at the beginning of the century, the Basque UGT has recognized the transcendental importance of education, aiming its efforts since then more toward the education of workers than toward agitation.¹⁸ Meabe favored the creation of socialist youth groups, "whose primary objective was this training."¹⁹ The *Casas del Pueblo* [*Houses of the People*] became the "school of moral, intellectual, and political education,"²⁰ with the objective of turning workers into "conscientious workers" and creating a culture friendly to worker groups.²¹ In the extraordinary educational work they undertook, the socialists were able to count on the help of eminent intellectuals from Bilbao.²²

From the most external considerations (workers' training centers should have dignified architecture and respectable premises) to the most profound requirements, whether theoretical (training of the whole person, not just professional; the importance of moral education; the creation of a worker culture, etc.), or practical (doing a job well, taking advantage of free time for cultural activities), it will be the same language of the Basque UGT members that we find repeated in Arizmendiarieta to surprising degrees of coincidence.²³

For its part, the Christian workers movement also undertook great educational efforts. To this end, the Basque Collective of Social Action, AVASC,²⁴ was founded (1932). The purpose of AVASC was, as we read in its literature, to orient and serve Christian labor organizations.

"We must train the social leaders of the country."²⁵ It organized training

¹⁸ Olabarri, I., *Relaciones laborales en Vizcaya (1890-1936)*, L. Zugaza, Durango 1978, 92.

¹⁹ *Ib.* 93.

²⁰ *Ib.* 96. By attacking dancing, drinking, bullfighting, gambling, and even sports, Basque socialists seem to have understood morality with a puritan rigor akin to the harshness of Arizmendiarieta (101).

²¹ *Ib.* 91 – 110.

²² *Ib.* 93.

²³ It is not necessary to repeat that the most direct and decisive influence on Arizmendiarieta was that of the "priest advocates" and other theoreticians of ELA. Still, we think that, even through them, the socialist influence is clearly perceptible. As indisputable as the differences and the opposition of Basque nationalism and the ELA to Basque socialism are, it is no less true that the latter was the great social school from which all later movements in Euskadi have learned. We also need to remember Arizmendiarieta's own confession that he had been a reader of *El Liberal*, edited by Zugazagoitia, cf. Larranaga, J., D., *José María Arizmendi-Arrieta y la experiencia cooperativa de Mondragón*, Caja Laboral Popular 1981, 28. Undoubtedly, Arizmendiarieta also drew inspiration from the experience of socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, where, in the words of J. Trillat, it was clear "how the school becomes the factory workshop, and how the factory and the *koljos* live in a close union with the school," cited in Ponce, A., *Educación y lucha de clases*, Akal, Madrid 1981, 179.

²⁴ The Arizmendiarieta Archive holds a copy of the program of AVASC. Jose Antonio Aguirre was the President of the collective, and F. Horn, the vice president. M. Oreja, who would be killed during the uprising in Mondragón of October 1934, was a voting member. This collective attempted to act independently of political parties. Its goal in good measure was to achieve a union of the Catholic and nationalist labor groups. Later, organized workers and nationalists would keep their distance from AVASC, cf. Elorza, A., *Ideologías del nacionalismo vasco*, L. Haranburu, San Sebastián 1978, 294-310.

²⁵ "Agrupación Vasca de Acción Social," 1932, 5.

workshops and lectures for this purpose, and published pamphlets and articles on social issues in the press. The Basque Social Workers University, also linked to AVASC, was created. It was similar to the ISO of Herrera Oria: “The principal aim of the USOV will be the solid social and Christian training of workers and employees in the Basque Country, with a goal of raising social culture and training advocates among the classes of workers and employees themselves.”²⁶

As usual, Arizmendiarieta will find no less a source of inspiration in the Personalist authors. “Mankind is not just an animal of nature,” Maritain taught, “like the bear or the lark. He is also an animal of culture, and his species can only subsist through the development of society and of civilization. He is a historic animal; thus, the multiplicity of cultural or ethical-historic types that make up humanity; thus, also, the importance of education.”²⁷

This general human need for education is accentuated in the current moment of crisis. “If humanity manages to overcome the terrible threats of slavery and dehumanization which it has to confront in our day,” Maritain writes during the war, “it will surely thirst for a new humanism, and be anxious to rediscover the wholeness of man, as well as to put an end to the internal divisions from which the earlier period suffered so much. To match this holistic humanism, a holistic education must be promoted...”²⁸

Mounier will recall with the same insistence the need for a new kind of education for the building of a new order. And he will show the same interest as Maritain in distinguishing the goals of this Personalist education from the objectives supposed to be characteristic of Marxist education. “The fact is that we do not distinguish between spiritual and the material revolutions. We simply affirm that there can be no fruitful material revolution that is not spiritually rooted and guided. That there are Marxists who want a spiritual renewal of mankind with all their heart, we have no doubt. But we continue to believe that, even if we try, without other values in the mix, only those of comfort and power will emerge from a purely economic stimulus. And to inject such values in the mix is to turn the entire mechanism of methods on its head. Thus, the revolutionarily profound work is not to awaken oppressed mankind to the awareness of his unique oppression, thus inciting him to personal hatred and demands and, as a consequence, to a new avoidance of himself. It is to show him, above all, and as the ultimate goal of the struggle, the acceptance of responsibility and the will to overcome, without which all the means available will be nothing more than good tools in the hands of bad workers. It is to lead him toward responsible and free action starting now, rather than diluting his human energy in a fine collective consciousness—even if it seems outwardly active—in the hope of a miracle of ‘material conditions.’ Together with doctrinal objec-

²⁶ Tusell, J., “Historia de la Democracia Cristiana en España,” *Cuadernos para el Diálogo*, Madrid 1974, 18-19.

²⁷ Maritain, J., *La educación*, 12-13.

²⁸ *Ib.* 149. “For the highest interest of the new civilization for which we are fighting, it is more necessary today than ever that education be education for mankind and for liberty, training for free men for a free community. Education is the place where freedom has its deepest human crevices, and where the reserves of freedom are kept alive” (171). On the subject of a personalist education see, also DAWSON, Ch., *La crisis de la educación occidental*, Rialp, Madrid 1962. GARCIA HOZ, V., *Educación personalizada*, Instituto de Pedagogía del C.I.S.C., Madrid 1970. ID., *¿Qué es educación personalizada?*, Docencia, Buenos Aires 1979. REBOUL, O., *La philosophie de l'éducation*, PUF, Paris 1981. QUILES, I., *Filosofía de la educación personalista*, Depalma, Buenos Aires 1982. UNESCO, *Aprender a ser*, Alianza, Madrid 1974.

tions, this ‘starting now’ is the principal tactical divergence which separates us from the best of the Marxists.”²⁹

Any order that calls itself human must extend education to the entire population. That is to say, it must give, in the current situation, special attention to the education of the working classes, which, to date, has been delayed. Apathetic or resistant children, observes Maritain, with no desire to learn and no curiosity of spirit (“laborer souls” as Arizmendiarieta would say) are no more numerous within the poor classes than within those more favored by fortune. “All those who have had contact with working youth and with the world of work know that nowhere else is one likely to find such a desire to learn, when sufficient means are at hand. This thirst for knowledge, for a liberal education, is mixed with the thirst to achieve social liberation and a historical coming of age. The education of the future must provide the “common man,” the everyday man, the means necessary for his personal perfection, not only in his work, but also in his social and political activities in civil society, and in his free-time activities.”³⁰

“They [children] have the right to nurture their hopes and live their lives, and the rest [of us] the duty to tend to them,” he says elsewhere (Ib. 191). At times, Arizmendiarieta has reflections of extraordinary delicacy and tenderness with regard to children. But in general he moves on a starkly realist level. This is so when attention paid to the child, it is understood (as it frequently is in his writings) as a profitable investment: “No money is better invested than that which is spent on children. Not only is it money saved later on clinics and hospitals, but it is also capital which becomes productive through the work of strong and healthy men” (Ib. 190).

“War,” J. Larrañaga tells us, “left an indelible trace on him. He understands the difference in power that comes from knowledge and learning. He sees the distribution of categories, the listing of captains, sergeants, and the other military ranks, as a simple cultural choice. Those who can read and write, those who able to communicate and engage in dialogue, are chosen. And this is when he determines something which, because it is evident, is brutal: an ignorant people is an enslaved people, dependent on the powerful minority.”³¹

A new order, such as that conceived by Arizmendiarieta, in which the working class is to fully assume its responsibilities, doing without outside managers to organize their activities, presupposes a double educational action: moral transformation and technical training. Let us remember that a writer like Lavergne, a “classic” of cooperativism,³² as late as 1971, judged worker self-management to be an unrealizable goal, showing himself in favor of turning over the management of large enterprises to the state. The Marxist idea of “free and equal association of producers” would be considered a utopian dream from the nineteenth century about relatively

²⁹ Mounier, E., *Manifiesto*, 53-54. *****

Arizmendiarieta has always given the highest importance to education. In 1947 he drafted “The Rights of the Child” (PR, I, 168-194), in which he states: “The child is born in order to become a man, and it is education, more than age, that makes him one. With respect to both the temporal and the eternal ends of the child, education and training are the key” (Ib. 189).

³⁰ Maritain, J., op. cit., 152. On pedagogy as “a science for transforming society” and education as a lever of history in Ortega y Gasset, cf. Llopis, R., *Hacia una escuela más humana*, Ed. España, Madrid 1934, 25.

³¹ Larranaga, J., D. José María Arizmendi-Arrieta y la experiencia cooperativa de Mondragón, Caja Laboral Popular, 1981, 31. It is not necessary to recall the remote and definitively platonic origin of the most general of Arizmendiarieta’s ideas (education as the foundation of progress, the basis of a just social order, etc.). In the same sense Aristotle, *Política* Book VII, cc. 13-17 and Book VIII. The idea of historical progress and grounding in education probably is from Hippias de Elis, cfr. D UPREEL, E., *Les Sophistes*, du Griffon, Neuchatel 1980. Without a doubt, Arizmendiarieta, in his conception of the new order, maintains a constant and tacit reference to Plato. At times, this reference become explicit in a polemical way, because, for him, Greek humanism was completely unaware of true human worth. Arizmendiarieta repeatedly insists on this criticism, perhaps because of the paganism in which he considers the modern world to be submerged, even going so far as to associate Platonism and national socialism (SS, I, 124).

³² This is the opinion of Aranzadi, D., *Cooperativismo industrial como sistema, empresa y experiencia*, Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao 1976, 258.

primitive enterprises. It seemed incomprehensible to him that thinkers of the present century, like Vandervelde and Sorel, could maintain the same proposition. “This is to try to ignore the extent of technical knowledge necessary for engineers, and the indispensable economic and financial knowledge for the decisions which constantly lead these great institutions to their success or their failure. Additionally, this denies the value of all modern science.”³³ Nevertheless, this will be exactly what Arizmendiarieta will propose with all his strength.

A close analysis of the roots of Arizmendiarieta’s thought reveals that they go deep into the nineteenth century and the movement of social emancipation of that turbulent period. “Work and education” (“Bildung”), K. Lowith wrote, became the substance of life of civil society in the nineteenth century. No earlier society experienced such a wholesale expansion of general education, while at the same time developing work energy, as what Burckhardt ironically called “the century of education,” whose work process Marx subjected to criticism.

Work became the means of existence of the day laborer, and gaining instruction, the prerogative of the learner. Nevertheless, in this very division of work and learning into two different categories, their essential connection is still evident in as much as the workers aspire to claim ownership of the prerogative of bourgeois education, while the learners have only been able to call themselves “intellectual workers,” in order that their prerogative not appear to be an injustice.”³⁴ It is precisely overcoming this dichotomy that will become one of the foremost concerns of Arizmendiarieta.

At times, Arizmendiarieta gives us the impression that he is a latter-day Enlightenment figure, living outside his century. Because of his grounding in this powerful social movement of work and study, and also because of his Personalist mentors, his educational goals tie in with Kant, to whose *Pädagogik* he owes not a few of his ideas and his favorite expressions concerning education.³⁵

From Kant, Arizmendiarieta derives his central idea that man is not born, but made; that “only through education can man become man. He is no more than what education makes him.”³⁶

From him, he also derives the ideal of humanity being happiest when transformed by education; that the individual person, as well as “the human race must, little by little, awaken, through its own effort, all the natural dispositions of humanity. One generation educates the next.”³⁷ Arizmendiarieta even finds in Kant the response to possible objections to this utopian ideal of a society transformed by education: “Perhaps education will continue to improve and each successive generation will move one step closer

³³ Lavergne, B. *Le socialisme à visage humain. L'ordre coopératif*, P.U.F., Paris 1971, 24, (translation by the author).

³⁴ Loewith, K., *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche. Der revolutionäre Bruch im Denken des 19. Jahrhunderts*, F. Meiner, Hamburg 1981, 284 (translation by the author). A remarkable relationship in the Basque language has been clearly established between “work” (*lana*) and “culture” or “training” (*landau*, and even *lendua*), for example in the nineteenth century work of J. B. Agirre, *Eracusaldia: añ landu gabeac, eta jaquinezac* (I, 144), *añ landugabeac badira guraso oec* (I, 489), *nolere bait landugabeac ceuden* (I, 610); *alaere badira guizon batzuec añ landugabeac, edo zuec esan oi duzuen bezala baso lana ere artu bagueac* (II, 98), *badira batzuec añ landugabe, eta basatiac, añ aberequiac* (II, 348); *baña oec ciran guizon jaquinezac, leundugabeac* (III, 26). See also: GIRREBALTZATEGI, P., “Gizona kultura bidetan,” *Jakin Sorta*, Nr. 4, 1971, 17-37.

³⁵ Disregarding the fact that Kant is one of the few authors named in his writings, Arizmendiarieta, on numerous occasions, either quotes verbatim or transcribes with slight variations expressions from Kant, especially from the little book *Pädagogik*, published by F. T. Rink.

³⁶ Kant, E., *Pädagogik*, in: *Kants Werke / Akademie Textausgabe*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1968, vol. IX, 443 (translations by the author).

³⁷ *Ib.* 441.

to the perfecting of humanity, since the great secret of perfecting of human nature lies in education [...]. It is delightful to imagine that [human] nature, through education, can be continually improved upon, and that it can achieve a state worthy of humanity. This opens up to us the perspective of a happier human race. A tentative theory of education is a splendid ideal, and there is no harm done, because at present, we are still not in a position to make it a reality. We should not judge the idea out of hand to be fanciful and reduce it to a beautiful dream, though obstacles may stand in the way. An idea (ideal) is nothing but the concept of perfection which is yet to be found in experience.”³⁸ The same criticism can be made of civil authorities who think of their subjects “only as instruments to serve their purposes,”³⁹ unconcerned about their authentic education, which would take them to maturity and liberation. Or the criticism can be made of short-sighted parents, more concerned that education be geared to the immediate success of their children within society, rather than fixing their gaze on the idea of a better humanity in the future.⁴⁰ Arizmendiarieta found all of these criticisms in the short work by Kant, as well as the idea that education is nothing more than the careful cultivation of the seeds contained in natural aptitudes and talents, and the idea that the educator of mankind is man. Clearly the importance of moral education, of discipline, of slow and sacrificing maturation, which should begin in childhood, are ideas that Arizmendiarieta found underscored in the stern philosopher from Königsberg.

³⁸ Ib. 444.

³⁹ Ib. 448.

⁴⁰ Ib. 447.

Let us highlight one final aspect concerning pedagogy, and do so by making use of the underlining which Arizmendiarieta made in his reading of the book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by P. Freire, another book in his library which is full of underlining and marginal notes. He who educates the oppressed person, the worker, is at the same time being educated himself. That is to say, the pedagogy of the oppressed person, as Arizmendiarieta underlines, “should be developed with him, and not for him.”⁴¹ It is necessary to live with and sympathize with him, to share feelings, faith, and hopes with him. “If a person is incapable of considering himself as much a man as others, he has a long road to travel to catch up with them. At this meeting point, there is no one who is 100% ignorant and no one who is 100% wise. Rather, there are men who, by communicating, seek to know more.”⁴²

⁴¹ Freire, P. *Pedagogía del oprimido*, Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires 1974, 40.

⁴² Ib. 108.

Summing up, education must be understood as a process of dialogue, a process through which a transformation occurs that gives rise to a new term. No longer “the teacher of the student,” no longer “the student of the teacher,” but rather, teacher-student along side student-teacher. In this way, the educator is no longer the only one who is educating. Rather, simultaneously, while he is educating, he himself is being educated by means of dialogue with the one he is teaching. Thus, both are jointly transformed in a process in which they grow together, and in which claims of authority no

longer are the rule.”⁴³

2.3 Work

A Basque socialist must be an exemplary worker and do his job well. Why? In order to win out over the Bible and return to work its category of *force majeure* [superior force]⁴⁴ The cooperative worker must be an exemplary worker and do his job well, Arizmendiarieta will answer in contrast. Why? In order to demonstrate his maturity as a man and as a citizen (FC, III.232).

In addition, in his moral, even mystical view of work, Arizmendiarieta is indebted to earlier Basque socialists. With them he shares pride in work, the pride of the worker who knows he is doing his job well, quietly looking down on poor or mediocre workers. And with the socialists he shares the desire to—in the words of Zugazagoitia—“embellish the idea of work, to make it agreeable and sweet, as sweet smelling and beautiful as May Day.”⁴⁵

Still, he will face head on the challenge to “triumph over the Bible,” developing his own concept of the dignity of work, by insisting that ‘work is not a punishment from God, but rather proof of the confidence that God has in man, turning him into a partner’ (EP, I, 298). And paradoxically, he finds support for this in Marx.

We find the oldest text of Arizmendiarieta on the dignity of work in some manuscript fragments, probably class notes from his time as a student. No one has lifted higher the dignity of work—we read in the notes—than Christians. The proof is that Jesus, before he devoted himself to preaching, had a thirty-year working career.⁴⁶ This strange argument never appears again in his writing. But it is an indication of his interest early on in a philosophy of work. In fact, in statements made to J. Larranaga, he referred in the following terms to his studies in the Vitoria Seminary: “At that time, among many ideas, those of Mounier were circulating. We had a teacher who was his student and, among other things, I recall and have fixed in my mind the idea that work ennobles man but society brutalizes him. According to the theory, we were to shoulder brutish and ignoble work as a service. We opened our minds to this new vision of the theological concept of work, not as punishment but rather as an opportunity for fulfillment. These were, then, key ideas which launched us toward other reflections.”⁴⁷

Without strictly limiting ourselves to Personalist authors, we need to recognize that Arizmendiarieta’s concept of work is essentially the same as Christian social doctrine.⁴⁸ That said, to state that capital is an “instrumental factor of production,” that is, of work, of which capital is said to be a product, and to deny on the other hand that work can ever be considered an instrument, as buyable and sellable merchandise⁴⁹, draws Christian social doctrine and socialism closer together. Personalist writers have been

⁴³ Ib. 90.

⁴⁴ Zugazagoitia, quoted in Olabarri, I., op.cit., 98.

⁴⁵ Ib. 98. “My work,” he has a worker say, “is delicate: it requires attention to small details, which I devote to it without quibbling. There are days in which work, far from being a punishment, as the Bible would have it, is a pleasure (...) Do you understand how work can be both a gift and a joy? Do you understand how we can escape secular punishment along a highway of love?” (Ib. 98-99, note 141).

⁴⁶ Hand-written notes (Arizmendiarieta Archive).

⁴⁷ Larranaga, J., op. cit., 28. Since he was most likely a reader, rather than a devoted disciple of Mounier, we might conjecture that the philosophy of work communicated by the professor from Gasteiz/Vitoria whom we quote was based largely on *Le travail e l’homme, ...* Nor can we exclude the work of Borne, E., *Travail humain...*, an author much praised by Arizmendiarieta.

⁴⁸ See a thorough exposition on the subject in Guix, J.M., , *El trabajo*, in: *Profesores del Instituto León XIII, Curso de doctrina social católica*, B.A.C., Madrid 1967, 395-583. *Código Social de Malinas*, cap. IV, nn. 94-100, *Códigos de Malinas*, Sal Terrae, Santander 1962, 93-97.

⁴⁹ *Códigos de Malinas*, 96 and 99.

very aware of this convergence.⁵⁰ “The abolition of the capitalist form of servitude as obligatory labor [?] is a necessity recognized by both Personalism and socialism,” states Maritain.⁵¹ Both he and Mounier recognized outright the powerful contribution of Marxism to the modern awareness of the dignity of work. At this point—in our opinion— we find Arizmendiarieta at his closest to the ideas of Marx.

“The importance of *Phenomenology* and its final result,” Marx noted in his Paris manuscripts,” consists of the fact that Hegel conceives of the self-creation of man as a process of “reification” and “de-reification,” of alienation and overcoming alienation, and of the fact that he thinks of the essence of work, and of the individual flesh-and-blood man, as the result of his own work.”⁵² Hegel, in effect, sees consciousness developing in the double confrontation of man with nature and of men among themselves, with both confrontations taking place in the distinctive activity of mankind, in rational work. (Contemplation, being passive, yields no consciousness of itself; rather it is a submission to the object being contemplated). Work raises up man as an entity. It is in work where we find the essence of man, where man finds his uniqueness and develops himself, becoming fully a man.⁵³

In addition, for Marx, work is the creator of consciousness and of freedom, the creator of man. In transforming nature, man transforms himself. In conquering nature, he conquers himself. In nature, man is incomplete and, torn apart from it, ripped from his original union with it. Only by humanizing nature will he be able to rebuild this primordial union. “It is through work that, little by little, throughout history man asserts his dominion over nature and realizes his true self. The activity of man slowly disentangles itself from nature and asserts its primacy over it. Thus, through work, man creates a humanized nature while at the same time defining himself, becoming progressively more spiritual as his dominance increases.”⁵⁴

In reality, we must refer to the wide tradition, only within which Marx can be understood, which, beginning in the Renaissance, replaces contemplative man with active man. And within this tradition, we must highlight, with regard to the philosophy of work, Hegel and Marx.⁵⁵ Neither classical antiquity nor the Middle Ages, the latter despite its concept of *ars divina*, a reflection of the creative *ars creadora*⁵⁶, was able to develop a truly positive attitude towards work. The Spanish word *trabajo* [work] itself, as well as its synonyms in Indo-Germanic languages, alludes invariably to its root meaning of poverty, orphanhood, servitude, low social standing, neediness, and poverty. Specifically, the word derives from *tripalium*, an instrument of torture.⁵⁷ This original meaning—which is not exactly Biblical—of punishment and suffering, is maintained down through the centuries. The Renaissance, with its elevation of manufacturing activity, and the Reformation, with its

⁵⁰ Lacroix, J., *Marxisme, existentialisme, personnalisme*, P.U.F., Paris 1971. Véanse, en especial sobre el concepto del trabajo, pp. 27-41.

⁵¹ Maritain, J., *Humanisme intégral*, 92.

⁵² Marx, K., *Manuscrits de 1844*, Ed. Sociales, Paris 1962, 132.

⁵³ Marcuse, H., *Ontología de Hegel*, Martínez Roca, Barcelona 1968, 252-258. ID., *Razón y Revolución*, Alianza, Madrid 1971, 117 ss., 282 ss. T AYLOR, Ch., *Hegel*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1978, 203 ss. VALLS PLANA, R., *Del yo al nosotros*, Laia, Barcelona 1979, 135 ss. R. DE YURRE, G., *El marxismo*, B.A.C., Madrid 1976, 25-28.

⁵⁴ Lacroix, J., op. cit., 30. Cfr. C ALVEZ, J. Y., *El pensamiento de Carlos Marx*, Taurus, Madrid 1966. GUICHARD, J., *El marxismo. Teoría y práctica de la revolución*, Desclée de Brouwer, Bilbao 1975. K ERNIG, C. D. F RENZEL, G., *Marxismo y Democracia. Enciclopedia de conceptos básicos*, Rioduero, Madrid 1975, 142-155. R. de YURRE, G., op. cit., vol. I, 28 ss.

⁵⁵ Arvon, H., *La Philosophie du Travail*, P.U.F., Paris, 1979, 13-40. L Oewith, K., *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche*, F. Meiner, Hamburg, 1982, 284-311

⁵⁶ The idea of mankind cooperating with God through work, which we also find strongly emphasized in Arizmendiarieta, seems to come from Pseudo Dionysus, cf. Vignaux, P., ... Nonetheless, in the Middle Ages, the aesthetic and penitential value of work predominates, cf. Guix, J. M. ... But, on the other hand, recall Bacon's aphorism, indicative of an incipient new and positive attitude: “Discoveries are like new creations which imitate divine works,” *Novum Organum*, Nr. 129, Fontanella, Barcelona 1979, 116.

⁵⁷ Guix, J.M., op. cit., 396-402. K ERNIG, C.D.-F RENZEL, G., op. cit., 130-132.

new work ethic^[^ch-127], laid the groundwork for the eighteenth-century glorification of work and entrepreneurship in which “a moral and mystical view of work arose, whose slogans were: *Ex labore honor, In labore robur, Labor improbus omnia vincit*, etc.”^[^ch-128] Active man has replaced contemplative man, and the inversion will be complete when Marx declares the suppression of Philosophy itself in favor of Praxis.

The famous quote from the *Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach*, “philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, but the trick is to transform it,”⁵⁸, will echo in Arizmendiarieta’s incessantly repeated phrase “the world was not given to us simply to observe it, but rather to transform it” (EP, I, 167).

⁵⁸ Marx-Engels, *Obras Escogidas*, Ed. Progreso, Moscú 1966, vol. II, 406.

It was important to engage in this brief discussion because it contrasts strikingly with the view of the crisis presented earlier. Then, we were witnessing, starting with the Renaissance, a general collapse of the most human of values. Now, beginning with the Renaissance, we observe the exaltation of the most human of values. But the contradiction is only apparent, not real, and understanding it will shed new light on the very concept of the crisis. H. Arvon has observed that it is precisely the greatness and eminent dignity of work which makes the bourgeois social order appear all the more scandalous and inhumane, and which reduces work to a simple commodity.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Arvon, H., op. cit., 32.

Thus, the order advocated by the Personalists will be a “civilization of work,” in which work will be freedom. “Work itself has become a myth, outside of man, and his servitude has been reinforced by it. Let us consider work, then, not by the strict definition that money has given it, but in the widest sense, on three levels: manufacturing, education, and creation. When we say “civilization of work,” we are not contrasting one myth to another, but primarily indicating our repulsion to a system which weighs most heavily on the workers, and secondarily, pointing out the path toward a society in which work, by finding its meaning and its unity, would tend, both collectively and personally, toward creation. This is a long path which, in certain contexts, passes through industrialization, but which is not to be confused with it.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Domenach, J.M., *Dimensiones del personalismo*, Nova Terra, Barcelona 1969, 13.

Just as was the case with Arizmendiarieta’s educational program, we see that his concept of work also arises from a strong synthesizing effort. We find within it Basque social tradition, an appreciation of the intrinsic value of work, the Christian theology of work, Marx/Hegelian inspiration, and Personalist philosophy. Arrizmendiarieta took the elements that suited his thought without hesitation and from wherever he found them. He was always open to suggestions and convinced that all currents of thought have something positive to contribute to the development of man.

By way of conclusion, let us highlight that dignity, education, and work do not constitute units or constructs in isolation, linked for better or worse by mere chance. These three fundamentals of any human order are not only essential, but are intertwined and manifest themselves together. The dignity of man is made. It is constructed. Which is to say—as Arizmendiarieta repeats—human nature is the artefact, preferably understanding “artefact” as education. Significantly, the same expression in Mounier generally refers to work.

Let us see, then, in detail, how Arizmendiarieta develops these three fundamentals.

Professional training: a necessary step to deal with the business world.

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