

## CHAPTER IV

### Work and Unity

“I cannot be indifferent to the destiny and the fate of my brothers whom I see suffer. That would be to mock them. The man who consumes energy for himself and is unable to live the life of others is small and weak, as much as he boasts of something else” (PR, I, 171).

If the Stoic philosopher went so far as to say that nothing human could be alien to him (FC, II, 56), the Christian, says Arizmendiarieta, who confesses the mystery of a God who takes pity on man to the point of becoming man himself, will be even less able to look impassively on the suffering of their peers.

In a world in which everything is related to everything, the man who ignores the pain of others is a monster. “It is commonly said that in the cosmos, there is no manifestation of strength or of power that does not cause repercussion and reciprocity, no shout that dies away without an echo. The only exception is the heart that is impassive to the pain of others. Such a one is a monster, who does not reach the category of human, much less Christian” (PR, I, 171).

Arizmendiarieta wanted to begin with the cooperative nature of man. If his business has been crowned with success, the effectiveness of the whole cooperative movement has lain, in his opinion, in the fact that “no one was little nor everything” (CLP, III, 249): at all times, the workers have acted according to the slogan of “for others and with others,” all integrated in community, with full personal involvement and cooperation connected rationally and technically, as well as adequately equipped and planned.

As of 1964, due to administrative demands, the newsletter *Cooperation* came to be called *TU*. When it came to interpreting the meaning of *TU* (Work and Unity), Arizmendiarieta used the name to embody his whole philosophy relative to work and cooperation. Elsewhere, we likewise see him worried about making sure that the name of the Caja Laboral Popular encompasses the relevant philosophy that inspired it. It seems that Arizmendiarieta carried this concern that names were a sort of summary of principles.

*TU*, as Arizmendiarieta explained, should not be understood as the sum of T and U, nor as an equation of  $T=U$ , although, J.M. Mendizabal tells us, Arizmendiarieta had a notable tendency to identify work with unity (FC, I, 8). *TU* never ceased to also be a personal calling, given that Arizmendiarieta conceived of the magazine as “an constant invitation to dialogue, to relationships, and to cooperation for the practical application of the postulates of social justice, in a business setting, in a climate of freedom and love, which are indispensable in a community of labor” (FC, II, 7).

Arizmendiarieta himself has taken charge of explaining the mean-

ing of its abbreviation to us: “Work is the firm base of development and advancement. Unity is the lever that multiplies everyone’s strength. Cooperation, to us, is a regime of solidarity, to make work the adequate instrument of personal and collective advancement” (ib.). Immediately afterwards, he reminds us that both concepts have been collected as basic standards in the Social Statutes: “Work is providence for the progressive satisfaction of human aspirations and the testimony of collaboration with the other members of the community for the advancement of the common good” (the very concept of work, therefore, includes that of solidarity). Here are the demands for the concept of Unity, as expressed in the Social Statutes: “Overcoming individual and collective servitude requires of the members a constant drive for perfection, personal cultivation, and the maintenance of an adequate associative process at every moment.”

## 1. Work

### 1.1. “The greatest thing a man can give”

In appearance, all socioeconomic systems recognize that a man’s fundamental good is his work. All modern ideologies and doctrines pick up on this idea, as well as Constitutions, and of them all, “it must be said that the Marxists take the cake” (CLP, III, 266).

In reality, things look different. In fact, none of the existing systems, theoretically built on the recognition of the dignity of work, offers an environment worthy of man. Arizmendiarrieta believes he can affirm this to be categorically so, and also prove it. Because, what is work? There is a writing of Arizmendiarrieta’s that tries to answer that question: let us follow his reflections, which are really an ode to work.

It’s difficult give a simple answer that explains what work is. It is, he tells us, a productive factor, a commodity, a magnitude, a punishment, what most excellently gives value to goods by transforming them, a need...

All that is work, but it is something more. It’s what outwardly characterizes man: animals do not work, they only live, move, feel, they do not work... It is a man’s means of communication with things, with nature, with other men. It is the demonstration of his lordship, the superior being in the world...

“It is, therefore, the most valuable and most sacred thing that we have in our hands, and in our hands means between we are born and we die. What is, therefore, the greatest thing a man can give to others, including God? His work” (ib.).

In the field of social relationships, there’s talk of collaboration, of fraternity, of camaraderie, human virtues that make society human. There is talk of charity, supreme virtue. And there’s talk of help, of alms, which are also charity, although accidentally, momentarily. But, definitively: “Charity is: to work well” (ib.).

Work in modern society is collective, as a team, even for liberal professions. Others are always needed, and the bonds of mutual dependence, which is to say, of mutual service, will become ever tighter. In this society, “to work well is to make one well-made thing, which is to say, a useful thing, that meets a need, whose cost is less than its price, and its price is fair and accepted. A thing made in a good way, with technique, with organization, with collaboration in unity of voluntary efforts, always respecting the man that works, because the ends never justify the means at all, and man, whether high or low in level, is always the most important thing” (Ib. 267).

Work, then, is charity. But for Arizmendiarieta, good intentions and good faith are not enough for him. If charity really wants to provide services to man, “so that man is more man” (Ib.), it must be effective.

Good faith is demonstrated today with two things: training and courage. Ultimately, with efficacy.

So, we arrive at a new aspect of work: it is a creator, whether for a Christian, or for a materialist-evolutionist. In the world, things are unfinished, are like fibers arranged to perfect and assemble a basket.

A political theory, a journey to the moon or to Mars, the cure for cancer, the discovery of a theology that brings us closer to the truth... all human work is collaboration on the great march of the centuries, where we men have a role that no other can play, and man contributes it with his work. It is necessary to continue until Omega (only a very few times would Arizmendiarieta refer nominally to Teilhard of Chardin) and each one has their stone to contribute.

To the extent that, with his work, he transforms, he creates the world of which he himself is part, man is creator of himself, through work: “man cannot grow and become more man except in work” (Ib. 267). Not only is the well made-thing made, and not only does the well-made thing remain in the great tide of the centuries as a milestone; the milestone also remains in man himself.

“Man grows as his works grow; he grows more, the more he is found in Nature, alone, and in community, reflecting on how to make other men happy, because that is to create goods” (Ib.).

“Work is not the mirror of man, not even the reverberation of his light. It is, rather, a part of him, something added to him, that enlarges him, models him, and transforms him into another man on a higher level, which is closer to God. And when He approaches, when He arrives, man will be what his works are, will be their eternal projection” (Ib. 268).

## 1.2. Dignity of work: economics

The first step to take, and the foundation of the cooperative movement, is the awareness of the dignity of work, both as an option of personal realization, and as an effective contribution to the common well-being and consequent testimony to human solidarity (FC, IV, 185).

This awareness is necessary in a society where work, for various reasons, is considered more a burden and a punishment than a means of self-realization and solidarity. However, the sources of the dignity of work are many, as the reflections in the preceding paragraph would suggest. We will begin with the dignity of economics, and thresh out the different aspects in successive paragraphs.

Our society has no awareness of the dignity of economics, which is usually considered exclusively from the perspective of utility. Dignity seems to be a concept reserved to man. And, it is true that economics receives its dignity in relation to man, or, to be more exact, where there is “servitude of economics to humanity” (FC, II, 194), since where man is subjected to economics, there cannot be talk of any dignity.

Supposing the principle of the primacy of man as first factor in the social order, and accepting the servitude of economics to it, Arizmendiarieta avails himself of an interesting analogy between soul and body, and economy and person, to express the dignity of economics. “We cooperators have no problem, nor do good Christians, pondering and respecting the dignity of the human body even when, in contrast and in relation to the spiritual principle, the soul, we say that it has nobility and primacy. Is not acceptable to take a position in which the body is not recognized as an entity that has condignity with the spiritual principle. Man is neither spirit or body separately; the nature of man leads us to respect the dignity of his body and of his soul. Something of this nature is what happens to us cooperators with economics: once in “our baby,” the cooperative structure, we have saved the subordination of economics to humanity; but it is an entity, the cooperative, that does not subsist while the first thing and the second thing are not perfectly conjoined with body and soul” (Ib. 195).

Continuing the analogy, Arizmendiarieta conceives of economics as an extension of body. “The human body, as a simple, indispensable wrapping for the soul, is worthy of respect; economics is born and destined to be man’s inseparable companion while he has to live here, and, at least for its content, must be always an object of consideration and appreciation” (Ib. 197).

The line between what is necessary and what is conventional, between what can be attributed directly to the community and to the individual, is not easy to draw. The description of *necessary* includes much of what, in a dynamic and progressive community, at any given moment, can be seen as superfluous, without that making it less desirable than the first thing. No barriers can be raised to the spirit of improvement that is nurtured with the springs of the desirable, driving a mankind to a state of tension and activity with which lead to new stages of wider availability for advantage of all.

Human activity itself is extending the field of its needs.

Here, we see the difficulty of drawing the exact line where, at a given moment, the border runs between what is necessary and what is conven-

tional. Arizmendiarieta prefers to entrust this distinction, in each case, to the mature and responsible conscience of each person, applying the just penitential scheme. This proves how literally he took the analogy of the soul and the body. It will be able to serve everyone, he says, as a criterion, “to oblige oneself to social or community compensation each time one is allowed a conventional satisfaction, and all the more generous, the more debatable the latter” (Ib.). As the body receives its dignity and grandeur to the extent that is subjected to the soul, and in the case of an inversion of these relationships, man must do penance, thus economics must be subjected at the service of man, and must equally do penance if man falls into the servitude of economics, that is how certain abuses that Arizmendiarieta would call “consumerist” are understood here. “This way,” he concludes, “the man who goes after what is desirable will not go as an animal might go; he will do it as a social being” (Ib.).

In fact, our society assaults the dignity of economics often and in a wide variety of ways, Arizmendiarieta warns us. It undoubtedly clashes with the dignity and rights of the body that prostitutes it, giving up without resistance to drunkenness, to mutilation, etc. “Do we think that economics is not object of analogous disregard, when economic resources are used in foolish and crazy ways, used for haphazard purposes or satisfactions, used for tearing down instead of building up, for fireworks (when it is needed for lighting in homes), for luxuries and trinkets, when it is needed to make coverage for natural and fundamental human rights affordable and viable?” (Ib. 195).

It is necessary to remind people of the dignity of economics, not only the bourgeoisie and capitalists, but all of society, including cooperators, who have begun proclaiming the dignity and primacy of work, since they continue to run the risk of wanting to imitate the former. Our people and communities today have sufficient resources to cover the elemental budgets of social justice in the advancement of the education, health, work, and even leisure of those who need them (senior citizens, the sick, etc.), just as they can cover compensation for a life consecrated to work.

They have sufficient resources: however such budgets are not, in fact, covered. And they are not, because we individuals and institutions alike prefer to burn money in other ways, seriously overlooking the demands of public and community solidarity. Among the factors of the state of injustice that we suffer, we should include those that are assigned to conventional satisfactions beyond what would be desired in a well-considered consumption policy. “It is an assault on the dignity of economics with waste, with sumptuous expenses, with provocative luxury, with sterile whims and refinements; in a word, we need to realize that the dignity of work must be safeguarded by treating its fruit as sacred as well” (Ib. 196).

### 1.3. Cooperation with God

“Nobody can have an idea higher of work,” says Arizmendiarieta, “than a Christian. Work cannot mean as much to anyone else as it does to the man who wants cooperate with God in the task of perfecting or

complementing nature” (FC, I, 37).

This, which means the highest dignification of work, also means its subordination to the highest end. God is over nature, over men. Man has been invited to contribute to the designs of God, and, it could be said that he can do no less than second them, with or without merit. He does so with merit when he proceeds to his tasks knowing that their ultimate goal is God. He will lack all merit when he acts unconsciously, or when, after subjecting other creatures to his dominion, refuses submit his own work to God. The dignity of work depends, therefore, in the Christian conception, on its being ordered for transcendent purposes. The king of creation, says Arizmendiarieta, will be a prince of comedy, if he is unable to consider work for anything other than his exclusive personal advantage (ib.).

This concept of work corrects and overcomes the widespread feeling of work as a painful and annoying need. The Christian must consider work, rather, as a grace: “Work is not God’s punishment, but a proof of trust given by God to man, making him his collaborator” (EP, I, 298). From there, it follows that work cannot be understood as a medium by which man can, outside of work, be self-realized; it is in work itself where self-realization must be possible. Nor can it be an instrument that provides us with the means to then be able to live free of it. “We do not want to work to be able to live without working one day. We do not aspire to our children having the disgrace of being able to dispense with work” (ib.).

Understood well, from the concept of collaboration with God are derived social consequences that Arizmendiarieta continues to point out. Work is one piece of the construction of the world and, religiously speaking, a decisive factor in the divine government both of nature and of human society. Man is king of creation, and is so precisely through his work. And “solidarity, which unites men, turns work into a force for liberation under all circumstances” (FC, I, 38). Work is thus the decisive factor whereby mankind reaches a decisive stage in its collective march, beyond the individual, atomized situation, beyond dependencies on nature. In work, it could be said, community emerges, and the human man also emerges.

Setting aside for now other considerations of a theological nature that could be made, this concept of work as cooperation (community) with God has a clearly “tendentious” meaning, which, at the same time, underscores the supernatural dignity of cooperation, in a restricted sense, such as the cooperative movement of Mondragon intended to put into practice, and the original, deep, natural root, on the other hand, of the principle of cooperation, that lies in human nature itself, not in circumstantial conveniences. It continues to be amusing that Arizmendiarieta considered Adam, prototype of the original man, but also of man in a situation of absolute solitude, as “the first cooperator,” suggesting that the cooperative spirit is as old as humanity itself. “And the one who proposed a system of cooperation to him was no less than God” (FC, I, 24).

As Arizmendiarieta reminds us, the first page of the Bible tells us that God created man and put him in the middle of paradise “to work.” God, the Bible goes on to say, rested after having created man, on whom he bestowed dominion over the other beings of Creation. From that moment on, man has worked, and with work, cooperates in the work of Creation. God could rest, because man, through his activity, was capable of transforming the world, creating new utilities and destinies in the things on which he that acts. “In other words, God makes man a partner in his own undertaking, of that wonderful undertaking which is Creation. Man, through his activity, transforms and multiplies things” (Ib. 25).

Arizmendiarieta continues to avail himself of the Biblical story. Before sin, he tells us, work was, without a doubt, as pleasant and spontaneous as sport; it meant a normal exercise of all his faculties. God called him to part of the honor and glory of creation, to then, in correspondence to his loyal cooperation, make him a participant in his eternal blessing and happiness. Only after sin began did work become arduous.

But, it never stopped being fruitful, nor did it stop playing the role of transformative factor in the world. Through work, man provides for his needs and expands the possibilities of nature. Nature, without the cooperation and work of man, would be a stepmother who could not sustain the current world population.

The use of the Biblical myth continues to be a bit strange. Although Arizmendiarieta had received a theological training of a classical cut, we can suppose that he knew the results of the modern exegesis relative to the Biblical story of creation (as indicated by some texts, though they date from fourteen years later, in FC, IV, 220). The explanation is found, without a doubt, in the side comments with which Arizmendiarieta has adorned the story.

So, “God, from the first moment of Creation, decided not to be ‘paternalist,’” because the key to success of the divine undertaking lies in the spirit of cooperation (as the key to success of the terrestrial cooperative business likewise depends on the spirit of its components, as Arizmendiarieta will not tire of repeating (Ib. 26). Or, after sin, “God removed him from paradise... But he maintained his commitment to cooperation, and did not remove him as member of his undertaking” (the commitment to cooperation is not just valid for rosy times), etc. And, definitively, what punishment is that punishment “from God” that makes work arduous? What is the sin that makes work really arduous as punishment? “If we ask our neighbors what makes their work most arduous and unpleasant, many us today will recognize that the most arduous and unbearable part of the human condition of work isn’t precisely the burden that God imposed on man in terms of needing to provide for his needs through an activity, but the circumstances external to it: its current organization and social structure, the lack of equitable participation in its products and results, etc.; in short, an organization not in accordance with the demands of human dignity” (Ib. 26).

To work is a sacred duty of man, but whoever interferes in the world of work by trying to take advantage of what their neighbor does is a usurper. “It is a social monstrosity to tolerate a system of social organizing in which some can take advantage of others’ work for their own exclusive advantage, and that is why cooperativism stands up against that system and tries at all cost to see that each person is respected and treated with consideration that a collaborator who has been raised to such a high range by God himself deserves. The rights of the worker are sacred” (FC, I, 40).

#### 1.4. Transformation of nature

“Work is the attribute that grants to man the highest honor of being cooperator with God in the transformation and fertilization of nature and consequent advancement of human well-being. The fact that man exercises his faculty of work in unity with his peers and in a regime of noble cooperation and solidarity cloaks him not only with nobility, but also of optimal fertility to make of every corner of the land a pleasant and promising mansion for all. This is what the communities of labor are for, and they are intended to help our people progress” (CLP, I, 190).

Arizmendiarieta frequently recalls that nature, abandoned to itself, does not turn out to be a paradise; it is a stingy stepmother (EP, II, 329). He brings it up both in relation to mankind in general and, in particular, nature in the Basque Country. Only work makes nature human.

The more consoling reality we stumbled across in the modern world, starting a century and a half ago, is that “nature as our stepmother has been transformed into a true mother, thanks to the action that scientific research and technological progress have been able to take upon it” (CLP, III, 26). This seems to Arizmendiarieta to be the most notable basic characteristic of our time, the strongest contrast between the modern age and times past. Nature, which was barely capable of poorly feeding several hundred million men a few hundred years ago, today offers possibilities of easily satisfying the needs of billions.

It’s not that nature has been enriched. It has simply been transformed. “Natural nature,” as Arizmendiarieta puts it, would be as impotent today as in yesteryear to satisfy the needs of man. A wild cow would barely give 1,500 liters of milk a year, instead of the 6 to 8 thousand that our cows give; wheat abandoned to its own fate would soon end up a grass that, at best, would produce a tenth of what it gives per unit today. If the transformative action of man were removed, nature would return to being an authentic stepmother, impotent to cover the needs of men. It is “domesticated nature” that has made affluence possible in meeting human needs (Ib. 27).

To the objection that man does not, in fact, live in affluence, in the huge majority of cases, Arizmendiarieta responds that the cause does not lie in the possibilities found in nature. “Today, if there are those lack what is necessary, or we fear that that we will have to go without, it is

no one's fault but man's" (ib.). Nature, which once seemed to rigidly condition the life of man, becomes, through work, a generous mother, prepared to help with the material and moral development of man. "Nature responds splendidly to the requirements of man, when he knows to address it to transform it and fertilize it with his work; the material universe is malleable material, it becomes tame and serves man, and it is inexhaustible, because the material extends across millions of light years and each gram contains billions of electrons-volts" (FC, I, 320).

The concepts of natural nature and transformed nature deserve finally a small observation. Arizmendiarieta frequently displayed his ecological concerns and not infrequently mocked a romantic ecologism, which he judged to be folklore and sentimentality (FC, IV, 244-245), more as interest in scenery than really in ecology. Even when he alludes to the rapid industrialization and urbanization of recent years turning Basque land uninhabitable, Arizmendiarieta does not propose a passive respect for nature, but a more rational transformation of it. While there is a lot that has been wantonly torn apart, Arizmendiarieta regrets that our towns are surrounded by many spaces and many zones "that are offered for our contemplation, like those created by virgin nature, without any rational and benevolent presence of man to transform them" (ib. 245). It is always "domesticated nature," not "natural nature," that has earned Arizmendiarietas' respects.

Indeed, work not only transforms nature in the sense of making it more fruitful, but also in the sense of beautifying it. The vocation of man as cooperator with God is not limited to turning the land into a source of wealth, but also in collaborating in the work that God did and saw that was beautiful. "*Lana izan gives urteen buruan gure lurralde au emokoi ta edergarrien egin dauskuna. Izatez ederra zana bizigarritsu lanak egin dausku*" (CLP, I, 258).

### 1.5. Self-realization of man

In his writings, Arizmendiarieta frequently uses the expression "the nature of man isn't simply nature, but an artifice, which is to say, nature transformed," and he does so with a double meaning: on the one hand, he means nature that surrounds man, exterior nature; on the other hand, and more frequently, he means human nature itself. We find ourselves with the paradox that human nature is, properly speaking, something different from "natural nature," which is to say, man is a being born with the need to become, with effort and work, to conquer his nature, as we will have the opportunity to underscore in other aspects (dignity, freedom, etc.). It is Arizmendiarieta's dynamic conception, in which everything finds their meaning in relation to the future, to the Omega Point that mankind aspires to reach. Everything is in movement, everything is on the way to realization, and the means of fundamental self-realization (as well as the medium for creation to "continue") is, for man, work.

It is with work that the deployment of the faculties is perfected and man is realized" (CLP, I, 215). By giving, by responding to his various

needs, man walks towards his plenitud, individually and collectively: “Work is the path of personal self-realization and solidarity, of individual perfection and collective improvement; it is the exponent of a more unquestionable humanist and social consciousness” (EP, II, 107). Work is the thread that unites man in his triple relationship, with nature, with his contemporaries, and with past and future generations. Work makes the land we live in more treasured, makes relationships and social-co existence easier and desirable, with the lubricant of a certain well-being, which, in large measure, we owe to the work of our predecessors and should leave to future generations (Ib.). “Work is a factor of humanization, becoming the motivation for socialization,” as has been indicated (FC, I, 38).

*“Lana izan gives eta ez izadia, ez beste ezer, gure erria mamitu duana eta gure lurralde oneitan bizi garan guztiontzat, bertako ta kanpotiko guztiontzat, gozagarritu duana. Baita lana eta lanpideak izan dira danok geien tartekotu eta gizagarritu al izan gaituana be; lan kutsutako giza-eziketak geientsuen buru ta biotzak, biak batera, giza-mintzen diguz eta izadia bera be gozagarritzen digu”* (CLP, I, 289).

So, work cannot be limited to benefitting man only materially or intellectually. This is a criticism that Arizmendiarieta directs at the dominant conceptions of work, which conceive of it as a mere instrument in the service of the material interests of man; at best, as a field of his intellectual self-realization. Our conquests have been truly great in these two fields: we have overcome many plagues, many miseries, many diseases. But there is a plague, the most pernicious of all, Arizmendiarieta will say, the one least defeated over many centuries, which has determined work itself so profoundly, and which has to be combated by everyone in his heart: it is the plague of selfishness (CLP, III, 4). Just as the technological conquests of one century serve those who live in another century, yesterday’s serving those of us who live today, so the conquests of the material order have a continuity and continue across centuries in ascendance. The same thing does not occur with those of the moral or spiritual order. There are no tangible quantities of transferrable virtue; the virtue of one day is transformed into disorder the next, if one does not remain alert.

A powerful factor of progress was selfishness, the ideal of getting rich. While this factor influenced material progress greatly, it cannot be said to have done much for the moral development of man. On the contrary. It has been a factor of disorder in the organization of labor, a disruptive factor, the cause of ongoing struggles. The conception of work as community cooperation with God demands that the ideal of wealth be substituted with the ideal of a humane, serene, progressive life in an authentically Christian climate, attending to each other, everyone providing shared effort towards loyal and generous collaboration. Arizmendiarieta firmly believes that these ideals can supplant the ideals of wealth, without diminishing the pace of development. “Our honorability, our solidarity, our drive for improvement can open up perspectives that might seem like a dream to us, but that really are not for those who are knowledgeable

about the socioeconomic realities of the present (Ib. 3).

Arizmendiarieta hopes that the substitution of ideals will even result in material benefits, through a better climate of work and cooperation: “Ulgor Workshops,” he told the first cooperators, “needs to maintain not only a climate of material progress, but also and, with more interest, when possible, of spiritual progress. In this order, we all need to seek to overcome the sprouts of selfishness so that, among us, this climate of warm Christian brotherhood endures. Let us be men with broad horizons, both in the material order and in the spiritual. If what we have reached is not enough for us, let us not think that what we have together is what hinders us, but let us move so that, through common effort, we all reach more, and you may be sure that will be such opportunities that no one here is going to feel they are in a straightjacket or a rigid mold” (Ib. 4).

### 1.6. Work and citizenship

It is work, as both as option of personal realization and as an effective contribution to the common well-being and consequent testimony to solidarity, that credits us as citizens. “Work is a credential of citizenship among us, of such scope that it cannot be postponed with appeals to history, culture, etc., and in such a way that in our country, it is sufficient to invoke all the juiciest and most promising things that their development and perspectives could entail” (FC, IV, 185-186). Work, the “school of solidarity” (EP, II, 85), is the base of community.

Work is the wellspring of new goods and services, which must make well-being possible for all, and the resource with which the worker aspires to maintain a deployment as distinguished citizen in all the settings of social, political, and economic life (CLP, III, 134). This conception, which Arizmendiarieta has maintained later in the discussion of whether immigrants ought to be considered Basque or not, has much broader repercussions in his ideas. A fundamental part of his thought is the demand that workers finally come to have awareness of being first-class citizens, the same as anyone else, without feeling like eternal minors or acting like them, evading their responsibilities. Arizmendiarieta would demand that the labor movement, still, in his opinion, mired in nineteenth-century purely protest-oriented plans, change objectives and strategy, to be consistent with the acceptance of full citizenship of the worker. In February of 1965, on the topic of collective agreements, wrote:

“Collective agreements have to be something more than a new version of the labor contract imposed on the worker by economic or political power, bartered for minimal means of subsistence to maintain his collaboration with development.

(...) Organized workers that proceed to bargain collective agreements should act with awareness as citizens and community members as distinguished as any other, and therefore collective bargaining must involve more than the perspective of the needs of the pantry —of the minimum wage— it should address other matters that are as imperative as mere sub-

sistence, which are their progressive advancement and integration into economic and social life, with the corresponding set of responsibilities and oversight.

Today it would be an irreconcilable position with the affirmation of our dignity as men and citizens of equal quality with the other members of the community if we managed our work and our solidarity with no more scope than that which, in past times, the worker could and had to manage despite his awareness, due to the weight of circumstance. We must have faith in our power, in the power of our unity, our solidarity, our involvement in all social and economic life, without relegating ourselves to second-place positions” (CLP, III, 134).

The awareness of full citizenship, with all its consequences, will be the foundation of the cooperative movement, in which the worker is constituted as a “worker-entrepreneur,” assuming all responsibilities, from the financing of the company to the search for markets and the social security of the cooperative members.

The demand for a new concept of citizenship comes, according to Arizmendiarieta, from “the awareness of the factors that, in practice, contribute to the level of well-being and progress reached, and those that are necessary to maintain and improve on it” (CLP, I, 255). Faced with this fundamental fact, all other differences, of origin, culture, etc. disappear. “It is a citizenship based essentially on the work provided and accredited, rather than on historical conditions that are inert or ineffective for the development of people. We refer to this citizenship, which is worthy of full acceptance and identification, of all those who can show us the corresponding worker’s card, contributing in unison both with their immediate efforts and with their residual values, consisting of savings and economic cooperation, which lead to further fruitful transformations of our country” (Ib.).

On the other hand, this idea is directly linked to the principle of the universal right to work, as well as to demands for the participation of workers in the management responsibilities of the company. As early as his conferences in August 1945 in Villa Santa Teresa, for leaders of the JAC of Guipúzcoa, the right and duty of workers’ participation in the responsibilities of corporate governance is emphasized, leading to resistance from employers who call themselves Christian. Citing numerous social doctrine texts by the Popes, Arizmendiarieta demands that the worker be recognized as an “intelligent collaborator” (CAS, 30), not as a machine; that the way be opened to the working classes to honestly acquire the share of responsibility in the conduct of the economy due to them by law; and that social forms be sought in which the worker finds full responsibility (Ib. 31)... “Isn’t any presence of the laborer or worker at certain heights of direction or management received with suspicion? Have any effective steps been taken to outline new social forms that invigorate the worker’s awareness of responsibility and spirit of collaboration?” (Ib.). This is a question, he tells us, for whose solution freedom can no longer be invoked, but rather, social justice.

## 1.7. Work and Ownership

Arizmendiarieta, as he has emphasized the dignity of economics, not in itself, but insofar as economics constitutes a servitude to humanity, wants to restore its dignity to property, returning it to its original relationship with human work. "Ownership does not grant the right to abuse goods: after all, no one can feel like a creator of them to the point of imputing to us an absolute right to their availability.

Many have played a part in their existence and promotion, and in their use and practical application, the consideration and deliberation of the common good is required" (FC, II, 196). At the origin and in the process of what comes into our hands, it is necessary to know how to discover the foresight of some, the collaboration of others, and the final destiny of what is advanced at the cost of so much sacrifice. We must always look around in order to be at ease with what we appropriate and use to satisfy our rights, lest we prevent the exercise of the natural rights of others who share existence with us.

A redistribution of property is called for, Arizmendiarieta taught early on, given that the first factor to be considered in the production of goods is work, so that "the workers, the proletarians, can participate in the benefits and even in management" (SS, II, 280).

Apart from consumer goods, the goods of production must be considered public funds, which have their origin in the common effort of all, in the joint contribution of the working community, constituted both by capital and by labor itself.

"For this reason, the right to property ceases to be an absolute right, with regard to part of those goods and those riches produced with the collaboration of all. It ceases to be an absolute right, and becomes what today is called a right of management or relative law, such that investment and employment and the administration of anything over a fair benefit, which is limited, very limited, although sometimes it cannot be specified exhaustively – in such a way, I repeat, that its administration has to be done in the fashion of public funds, not being able to be used even on good things, unless it respects the order and gravity of needs" (SS, II, 312).

In Arizmendiarieta's opinion, this concept of property, always understood in reference to work in all aspects, is opposed to both capitalism and communism, since, while the latter denies the right to property, considering it a source of inevitable abuses, capitalism accepts the primacy of capital over labor as an indisputable principle, "leaving the latter with a meager salary, without the right to anything more and, above all, without the right to management, thus making the generalization of ownership, which is nothing more than the fruit of work or occupation, impossible (SS, II, 276)." The remedy for the present evils, Arizmendiarieta concludes, is against the capitalist system in the practical recognition of this right to property and its satisfaction through the contracts of society, at least, or through cooperatives or unions of small owners, and against collectivism in the acceptance of the right to property, which is the only thing that

can provide man with that sphere of freedom within which he can defend his dignity” (Ibid. 278).

### 1.7.1. Cooperative property

The concept of cooperative society is fundamental in this context: on the one hand, it has allowed Arizmendiarieta to develop his concept of socialism, more specifically of specifically Basque (cooperative) socialism, by allowing him to dispense almost entirely with the State, which constituted an equivocal point in his labour inclinations. On the other hand, he has been able to remain faithful to the “ideal” of maximum distribution of private property, which also seemed to be in danger after the encounter with socialism, without having to surrender to the exclusively individual capitalist property that he found so repugnant. However, Arizmendiarieta’s cooperative thinking was maturing, little by little, and the concept of the cooperative society (with the subsequent concepts of cooperative property, etc.) will only take shape throughout the ’50s and ’60s. We must, therefore, insist that we are faced with thought that is always in process, in search of new ways. Perspectives and approaches are changing without ever being established in a definitive and fixed state. Since the late 1940s, after the encounter with Labour doctrines, Arizmendiarieta’s thinking seems to have focused on the issue of education and work. The quotations from socialists are now joined by the names of Pestalozzi, etc., or authors of Personalist inspiration, such as E. Borne, the “philosopher of work” (EP, I, 49), E. Mounier, with whose concept of revolution Arizmendiarieta is identified (FC, II, 246 ff.), J. Maritain (Ib. 74). In contrast, the previously innumerable quotations from the Supreme Pontiffs fade, until they disappear almost entirely. It can also be observed that the social question, previously always dealt with in close reference to the Church or the religious question, definitively loses this reference at this same time, and becomes an autonomous question. However, nothing suggests that we are looking at a crisis or abrupt change; rather, everything indicates that it is a slow process of maturation of thought.

The concept of cooperative ownership (which implies a cooperative society) has been expounded in this way by Arizmendiarieta: cooperativism tries to make everyone creditors to capital, to property; and he pursues this end despite having to operate in a largely incompatible environment and institutional framework, in a natural and educational climate that undervalues community values. First of all, cooperativism ends the divorce of ownership and labor. Then, it esteems and values ownership, not in itself, but for its dynamic character, for its condition as a tool of advancement: “not only does cooperativism advocate for private property and capital when the assets are the result of effort, of sacrifice, but it greatly values them as elements of progressive advancement and, therefore, in no environment can it be better considered a heritage that is born of effort, constituted by subtracting from certain comforts, than among cooperators.” Cooperativism, finally, promotes ownership for all “through the parallel and synchronized advancement of personal and community assets,” in opposition to capitalism, which causes a such con-

centration of individual ownership that most do not have it, or have it in purely symbolic ways (CLP, I, 142).

Co-operative ownership, therefore, has the triple aspect of individual possession, community possession of the goods of production, and work done with one's own goods. This is the ownership that, in Arizmendiarrieta's opinion, can and must effectively guarantee the freedom of workers. "The coming of age of the working class will have been affirmed when it, as such, affirms a firm position on the possession of productive goods and consequently exerts its influence on all domains of the economy" (FC, II, 40). The old doctrine of property as a guarantor of freedom and a means of self-realization takes on a new dimension. It does not have to be individual and private. Ownership, although perhaps less "private", is not less personal, being communal in this cooperative way. Its community dimension shows that "property is not an absolute right, as we had believed until now, but has a social function to fulfill. The right of private property is good insofar as it serves to maintain the freedom of its owner, but in no case to step on, limit, or deprive other men of freedom. Therefore, with what is ours, we must do what is most fitting for our personality, considered within the community in which it is framed, since, if we do not take this into account, we could harm others" (Ib. 164-165).

Arizmendiarrieta, also critical of himself, has not failed to consider that all this could remain mere fiction. Let us remember that, once the cooperative solution is accepted, the ownership of goods loses importance, and instead, the ownership of labor itself, which is the source of goods, acquires value. Cooperativism wants to make the worker the owner of his work. However, to be an effective owner of work, it may not be enough to be a co-owner of the goods of production and an equitable participant in the results.

In some reflections on the nature of work in the future and the difficulties of the worker being integrated, Arizmendiarrieta confesses: "The general context of the work will change, and the image of hardship will be transferred from the muscular to the psychological level, but the path of partitioning undertaken with the deification of the division of labor seems irreversible. Work in the future will require the concurrence of factors that barely register in the valuation schema, such as the receptive capacity of symbols and coded orders, the sense of responsibility of the group, etc. There is no glimpse of a future with greater creative content of a generalized nature but rather, predictably, the specialized and atomized direction will be accentuated, working conditions will be disrupted, and the legalistic approach that emanates from the company's governing board will persist, fatally" (FC, II, 147-148). Therefore, becoming the owner of one's own work will not yet be equivalent to being the owner of oneself, freer and more human.

Technical specialization and the monotony that follows from it may have no other solution, Arizmendiarrieta says, than compensation through generalized leisure and a broader range of options. There remains, however, the problem of the legalistic approach: fatally, it will be

more and more the technicians who dictate what should be done, how, and who can occupy certain jobs. That is, the proprietor of work will not be its owner. Something similar happens to the cooperative worker to what has happened to the capitalist, whose authority has been supplanted by that of the managers and technicians in the modern company.

In trying to find a solution to this problem, Arizmendiarieta distinguishes two concepts, which are not very clear, of work: “monetary work” and “work made property” (Ib. 149). Monetary work, he says, is a conventional fiction, accepted as a medium of exchange; it does not seem to be equivalent to simple salary, the monetary expression of work of contextual value, but also encompasses the monetary value of the production goods owned, investment made by the cooperative, etc., as much of its participation and activity is translatable into currency value. This concept surely has no other function than to help us understand what Arizmendiarieta wants to underscore as work made property, “which implies the responsibility and participation in the governance of the company by the owner of the work” (ib.). Here, equal promotion options appear as the first presupposition for work to become the effective property of the person doing it. However, it does not guarantee a complete solution, among other reasons, due to personal inequalities (ib. 148). The cooperative system goes one step further, recognizing equal decision-making power in everyone, regardless of the position they occupy (one person, one vote). “Regardless of the amount of the initial economic contribution, the cooperative vision of the company visualizes the integration of man into the channels of government through the ownership of his labor power, with indices that correlate his particular contribution. Does this escalation in the resources of power guarantee his integration?” (ib. 149). Arizmendiarieta again replies that cooperative democracy is not a sufficient *de facto* guarantee. “The mental disposition of the men whom we nominally integrate as cooperators, no few, are absent, due to the lack of moral conditioning of their work. We believe that this situation occurs despite the legal formality of association, as a consequence of imperatives foreign to one’s own personal will” (ib. 150). Not all jobs offer equal moral conditions such that, not only legally, but in fact, all workers fully exercise the “ownership of their labor power” by intervening in the channels of government.

With these rather obscure texts (from 1966), Arizmendiarieta undoubtedly wants to confront us with the problem of alienation in the act of work.

If it is assumed that work essentially belongs to man, man who does not fully own his work is dehumanized. Cooperativism has wanted to ensure, first, the dominance of work through the ownership of production goods. But then, Arizmendiarieta can see that mere ownership is not enough. “Ownership,” he writes, “myth or reality, continues to occupy the pen of those who perhaps assign it an exaggerated value as a source of integration. Its historical and still current role is still highly valued. How long? The future is difficult to predict, but it will be functionalized at

the service of society; the company of the future will be one that offers a structure open to hope and moral satisfaction at work” (ibid.). Ownership will cease to exercise, as Arizmendiarieta expects, the dominion that it has exercised, and still exercises, over the company. In fact, in the cooperative enterprise, it has already stopped doing so. From that moment on, the company of the future appears to be the one that offers greater moral satisfaction to labor, and is more open to hope.

Does the cooperative structure respond to this hope? Arizmendiarieta wonders. But he prefers to leave the answer in the air, pointing out that, despite some flaws, cooperativism “contains starting elements that fit the indicated line” (ib.). Arizmendiarieta has never considered the cooperative as the model company or the company of the future. Just as a starting point towards her.

### 1.7.2. Overvaluation of jobs

We are not interested in the technical aspects of the subject (cf. FC, I, 225-230; FC, II, 79-82), which will give rise to serious conflicts, but the difficulties of principle encountered by the early cooperators in this matter. Indeed, if we start from the fact that citizenship resides in work, and that all work is equally dignified, the valuation of jobs and consequent classification in a different hierarchy of remuneration needs another form of legitimation. It is, in a way, a small deviation from the basic principles.

Arizmendiarieta recognizes the drawbacks, as it means introducing differences and degrees within the cooperative community. However, it considers a necessary measure to mature the organization (FC, I, 225). They are practical reasons that impose the valuation: first, to calculate the relative importance of the different jobs of a company; then the valuation serves as an instrument of knowledge of the intrinsic power of each job to assign the base or structural index and ensure a rational distribution of remuneration. Arizmendiarieta appeals to the maturity of the cooperative members so that this reform does not cause repercussions of greater scope, “as they do not usually provoke in men [this moral opposition of man to woman is not uncommon in Arizmendiarieta] resentments or envious minimal differences of accessories, such as those of their clothing or simple hobbies” (FC, III, 246).

Arizmendiarieta, who has often stressed human equality, nevertheless rejects the “idyllic egalitarianism, which would end up stifling any initiative to excel” (ib. 227), i.e., believes a wage differential scale is necessary. The reason given will be that of staff empowerment. “It would be suicidal to forget the inexorability of the laws of efficiency, which start from a fair weighing of personal merits, the basis of satisfaction and dedication to work. It is the obligation of every working community to keep the best prepared men at the top, admitting a discrete differential scale in tribute to our weak human condition, which moves around the vanity of a few pesetas and the suggestibility of power, at least until we possess it. But these are the natural stimuli that we cannot do without as long as man as such does not undergo mutation” (ibid. 228).

A technical assessment of the jobs does not imply any personal assessment; Arizmendiarieta will not forget to remind the cooperative members that the true, authentic, merit rating is something that each one has to do every day, by looking inside. The best index of the merits attributable to each is their sense of responsibility. After all, he will say, each one must render in proportion to what he has received from God or from others; some must give and do more than others, without this making them entitled to anything special. "That is why we advocate that in the qualification of merits, we begin and end by examining each one in view of their execution in the line of responsibility in any of the important or modest acts of life" (FC, II, 97).

"We will probably all agree," he concludes, "that we need responsible men more than important men, and that the important ones, as soon as they neglect their responsibility, prove fatal" (ibid. 98).