

Date: 1999

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Original language: Spanish

Origin of the text: Reflection carried out for the Testimony Project. Is one of the nine texts written to provoke the discussion in the discussion-groups of the co-operative agents.



## 2. ATTITUDES

An important part of human actions resides in its attitudes. It is essential to inform about, update and debate the attitudes that underlie the individualist praxis or that at some time have influenced the Cooperative Experience, since they are the fundamental levers needed to revitalize the actual Experience.

### ETHICAL INDIGNATION

In the face of the perception of global reality described above, the position from individualistic humanism cannot exclude ethical indignation. And from here, without allowing itself to be standardised by values and subtle justifying myths, to promote deeply different realities, to activate different praxis, to practice realistic utopias, which can only be increasing (and not defensive) in ethical-practical coherence.

The ethical bases and bases of thought that sustain the creation of the Mondragón Cooperative Experience come from a deep awareness of indignation, an implacable diagnosis of the crisis of our civilization and a clear desire to deeply transform the social reality.

### SITUATING OURSELVES IN REALITY IN ORDER TO TRANSFORM IT

It is our task us to situate the meaning of the experience in the complex, scandalous, demanding and exciting global reality. The Experience can be a great contribution in the humanization direction. It can also constitute a great paradox, a paradox that is repeated in history: something that appears to be the most interesting, the most germinal, can, from a wider point of view, turn out to be a swindle, an illusionism that reproduces something inhuman.

The Cooperative Experience may be in the dilemma to progressing towards the "new man", or to carry it out in the opposite way, by reproducing in the long term the type of consumist and individualist man that inhabits the West at this time of abysmal inequality.

Combining utopian tension and realistic adaptation is the most beautiful and at the same time the most difficult of all actions. Only with utopian renewal is it possible to break away from the convenience that is implied by settling in the "realism" by reproducing a great part of the fashionable mentality.

The current reality has an enormous dehumanisation load. It is true that we should live and be effective IN reality, within it. We have to be efficient, the company must be competitive. However, this should be carried out not just for the sake of being efficient, or to continue growing. It is necessary to be efficient FOR the progression towards a new man, a society that is increasingly self-managed, a different education, the multidimensional development of man, a real solidarity, etc.

When the IN is inflated and the FOR is obscured, it is time to reflect, this reflection is necessary because the germ of our Experience, the wide thought that inspired it, has a great depth and strength.

## REALIST UTOPIAN ATTITUDE

In its open attitude of continuous connection, the deep coherence of cooperative thought resides in its **direction**: to progress towards a new social order, a new human being. This progression, this direction or utopia constitutes the vector that gives coherence to our thought and experience.

Once our values have been identified along with their direction, it is the reality that is established in an undeniable field of action: the market, globalisation, the vertiginous technological advance, etc. It is evident that we must mature our experience from the capitalism and economic rationality that accompanies it. It is useful to remember the place composition that Arizmendiarrieta articulated with regard to capitalism, through four concepts: *to denounce* the capitalism, *to learn* from capitalism, *to be* in capitalism, *to overcome* capitalism. This seemingly paradoxical conceptualisation constitutes the creative balance that we need in a globalised reality that is in a state of constant change.

To maintain a critical attitude with regard to the reality in which we are inserted, is at the same time, to learn from this reality and to assume our insertion in it. This dynamic balance demands the constant refuelling and reconstructing of our coherence, without easily falling into the approval of objectives and mentalities.

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF TIME

The processes of social and human change should necessarily consider the time factor. From this perspective it is advisable to reject as unreal the possibility of total and sudden changes that are purely "utopian" in the pejorative sense of the word. The processes of becoming aware, development and improvement of experiences require their own time. The

cooperation is a long-term aim in so far as it implies the constant maturation of the collective and human awareness.

## HUMILITY AND TRUST

If we situate our practical and coherent model of emancipation and human development in the heart of a diversity of experiences, an awareness of humility is created, without pretences of being established in a global alternative, willing to learn from others, identifying and covering the gaps in our thought and practice, and sharing with other humble but significant emancipating experiences (both in the Basque Country and at an international level).

This humility should not be understood as a lack of trust in ourselves in the light of the pressure of the single system of values. Nor should it imply the underestimation of our objectives and potentialities. On the contrary, it implies the trust in the intimate strength of our perspective and to the establishing of new objectives, since the path we have chosen will only preserve its coherence and meaning in this way.

## OPEN ATTITUDE, TO AVOID DOGMAS

Both the experience and the ideas-force that move us are open, always linked to a changing reality and therefore they avoid immovable dogmas. The realization of the person and the development of the community are understood as *processes*, processes that are constantly being adapted; like learning processes.

## INNOVATING PERSEVERANCE

This opening implies an attitude of rethinking and constantly innovating. If we do not make an effort to adapt and continuously renew we run the risk of being left behind. In this phase of history this maxim regains an unusual strength: in the face of the vertigo of the constant technological change if we are not prepared to join the change we will not be able to compete. In the same way, in the face of the strength of the standardising thought the task is imposed of permanently reconstructing and updating our values and our coherence, at the risk of being paralysed and increasingly assimilated by the dominant mentalities, values, justifications and objectives.

## ATTITUDE OF CONSTRUCTION

The cooperation is not a theory or thought that looks at and thinks the reality from the outside. Nor is it limited to combining what is in force, but rather it imagines and puts into practice new possibilities. It is mainly a construction experience, and it possesses a creative and constructive

attitude. In this task of the construction of companies, institutions, activities, experiences, we come closer to new realities and advance in the transformation of society.

## OVERCOMING THE RISK OF DEFENSIVE ATTITUDES

The progressive assimilation of the prevailing objectives and mentalities can be a real danger. It is not difficult to lose trust in our strengths and our coherence in the face of the strong drive of the single system of values, especially if a sincere effort of renewal and deepening is not carried out. This deepening attitude is the opposite to the defensive attitude. The defensive attitude involves **assuming recession dynamics**, taking steps backward bit by bit in our coherence, and it denotes an unconscious lack of trust in the validity of the actual values.

We can describe this attitude by going over the cooperative history, or also by searching in the words, expressions and explanations of many of those responsible for the cooperative network. If you have a defensive attitude (even if it is unconsciously), you will inevitably end up going backwards. It is true that between the adaptation to reality (necessary in order to maintain the direction) and the recession of the actual coherence in the light of it, there is an almost invisible line, which is very difficult to determine, and on many occasions we must walk along the edge of the paradox. For this reason, it is advisable to make sincere evaluations and reflections, to renew coherences, and go deeply into the directions.

Otherwise, we could end up unconsciously considering economic development as almost the exclusive objective. We could change the idea-force by understanding "education" essentially as "technical preparation", and understanding "transformation" almost only in the capitalist sense of growth and development, etc. For reasons such as the tension that the competitive reality produces and by following a practice of submission with regard to the increasing values, or what is the same, the non-revitalization of our own values, we would limit the cooperative reality to an organizational difference. This organizational fact is still tremendously important, but the **transforming direction** of individualist cooperative thought was (and can still be, if we assume it) much deeper, multidimensional and ambitious. Only by advancing in a multidimensional way can we avoid going backwards.

## ATTITUDE TO THE SOWING PROCESS

Overcoming defensive attitudes and avoiding the distortion of the Experience could imply, among other things, assuming an attitude for a constant sowing process. That is to say, an attitude of permanent education as regards ourselves, and the new generations. Arizmendiarieta actually said that our cooperativism can be defined as an economic movement that uses educational action, or that the terms could also be inverted by saying that it is an educational movement that uses economic action.

This would mean updating and revitalizing in a permanent way, through education and its application in the praxis, values and basic positions of the Arizmendiarieta experience, revitalizing the meaning and direction of the cooperative experience. The sowing process is continuous. It is necessary to pay attention to this "agricultural" work of the Experience.

If efforts are not invested in this careful and conscious task of sowing, phenomenon such as the loss of self-confidence and the internalisation of defensive attitudes will have a free way for expansion. In the light of the dominant reality and the pressure exercised by the values that sustain it, it is part of our task to reconstruct our own way of understanding and transforming reality. One of the steps may consist of making a sincere evaluation of what has been carried out as regards this dimension of education in the history of the Experience.

#### Questions for debate:

- To what extent do we start from ethical indignation in the face of the socio-economic reality and to what extent do we gradually assume the effective way of arguing and evaluating in the system?
- Has utopian tension been lost within the Experience? Or has the direction of these "utopias" and the transformations been neglected, aiming at objectives (economic development, growth) that by themselves no longer produce illusion in most generous and utopian young people?
- Are the symptoms of a "defensive attitude" that are mentioned in the text real? Is a non-defensive attitude viable? Is a defensive attitude unacceptable from an individualist perspective?
- As an Experience should we have a more ambitious and dynamic attitude in a multidimensional sense (educational, social, cultural, spiritual, international emancipating dimension of exchange, etc.)?
- Could the fact that the Experience has concentrated almost exclusively on one business group (in the business-economic aspect) and not gone deeper into other dimensions (educational-intellectual, socio-cultural etc.) be the reason that in the long term it has no other choice but to be defensive?
- What evaluation is made on the treatment given within the Experience to "education", that is so important for Arizmendiarieta? Has education been exclusively understood as "technical preparation" and has the actual heart of the meaning of the Experience been obviated? Are we not yet in that inertia? How should we face this dimension?
- What priority do we give to the regeneration of the cooperative spirit?