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**CASUAL POVERTY IN THE SPANISH ENLIGHTENMENT:
JOSEFA AMAR Y BORBON AND THE REAL SOCIEDAD
ECONOMICA ARAGONESA DE AMIGOS DEL PAIS¹**

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To define what the Enlightenment is with a few well-chosen words is almost impossible, and it is no easier to explain why it still holds so much fascination for so many. The complex, confused and confusing world in which we live has led many to identify the Enlightenment with reason and progress, to hold the optimistic belief that reason harnessed to knowledge could improve the human condition and help humanity to achieve social goals that would otherwise be unattainable.

This vision of the Enlightenment, firmly implanted in the cultural and historical imagery of present day society, is not an impartial one and has tended to obscure others. It might come as a shock to some when they discover that one school of thought was convinced that the source of progress was self-interest and selfishness, vice and corruption. This altogether different vision of human progress was defended by writers such as John Locke and Bernard Mandeville. Mandeville was a Dutch doctor of medicine who went to London at the beginning of the 18th c. to live in that peculiar haven of liberty and hard-headed commerce. In his famous work, *The Fable of the Bees* (written in 1714), he maintained that it is in fact vice and immorality and not virtue that are the human qualities that bring about progress. This world view was by no means elitist. Mandeville's work was widely read throughout the 18th c. and its influence on the thinking of the period was such that it appeared in the work of Adam Smith (as Hundert has recently demonstrated).

Although this more mordant vision of the Enlightenment is important and merits deeper analysis, it is not central to this article. The focal point of this study is the social setting of the Aragonese Enlightenment as seen from the perspective of the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del Pais, and Josefa Amar's brief period of direct contact with the institution. What is notable is that reason and progress do play a part in this story, while vice and corruption appear to be conspicuous by their absence.

Much of the story takes place in the city of Zaragoza. At that time it was a small, somewhat provincial town that had little of the febrile life of Madrid or Barcelona and, in comparison to Mandeville's triumphantly immoral London would have seemed very parochial.

I have applied the following sequence to this study: firstly I consider Josefa Amar's family and social background. Then I will analyse the activities that took place during the Aragonese Enlightenment and those of the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del Pais. Finally I will set out to

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interpret Josefa Amar's activity within the Sociedad during the most significant years of her intellectual progress.

Josefa Amar and her family circle (until 1776)

There is a relatively large amount of biographical information about Josefa Amar and her work, thanks to the research of academics such as Carmen McLendon, M. V. López-Cordón, Constance Sullivan and others. This article has no new information², but for the purposes of this study I would like to summarise what is already known and more importantly, underline the less known social context of her upbringing.

Josefa Amar was born in Zaragoza in 1749. In 1754 she was sent to school in Madrid. Some years after her marriage she returned to Zaragoza in 1772 where she was to live for the rest of her life. She is known to have had at least one child, Felipe Fuertes Amar, who was licensed to practice law. In 1802 he obtained the post of *oidor* at the Audiencia de Quito, which was presided over by his uncle, Antonio Amar (López Cordón "Introducción" 19).

The intellectual output that can definitely be attributed to Josefa Amar was limited to the period 1782-90, which coincided with her also recorded membership of the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del Pais and its counterpart in Madrid. She then disappears from the stage as an intellectual and active *ilustrada*. There is evidence to suggest that she continued to write although none of this later work ever came to be published. She continued to live in the town of her birth to the fine old age of 83. She is known to have been active in at least one welfare organisation, the *Hermandad de la Sopa* (a charitable society that gave food to the poor). She remained in the city during the two sieges of Zaragoza by the French Napoleonic forces in 1808-1809, lived through the reign of Fernando VII, and finally passed away in 1833.

Up till now, most biographies of Josefa Amar have focused on her very much as an individual and quite naturally some have a definite feminist approach. This is more than understandable given the nature of biography itself, her activity and the times she lived in. However I would like to add a broader social dimension that I believe is fundamental for a greater understanding of her life and work. For that, her life and activity within the Real Sociedad should not only be interpreted in terms of individual enterprise, but also in terms of groups and social networks. M. V. López Cordón, for example, has hinted (and I am inclined to agree) that Josefa Amar received support from the Count of Aranda (16). This sponsorship would not only have come from the Conde but also from the social network of which he formed a part and which Olaechea referred to as the *partido aragonés*. This regional lobby had played a part in Spanish politics since the mid 18th c. The network most likely came into being through inter-relationships amongst networks of patronage between nobles and civil servants of Aragoneses origin. Much the same process had already occurred amongst the Basques and Cantabrians, who, due to demographic pressures in their own regions had been steadily migrating to Madrid since the beginning of the 17th century and establishing their own networks. Other factors were the growth of ministerial bureaucracy and the steady migration of the regional nobility to the Royal Court.

² I will almost exclusively use the information provided by her most principal and most recent biographers: Sullivan (1992) and (1993), and López Cordón (1994). Another point of reference will be the works of Forniés (1978) and (1997).

Some biographical details that occurred before Josefa Amar's husband's membership of the Real Sociedad in 1776 are, in my opinion, worth exploring in greater depth. As far as I know there has been no research into the fact that part of her family had at one time been members of the nobility in Borja (Aragón), probably belonging to the level of the aristocracy known as *infanzones* (minor nobility with limited rights). This is of some importance as is the consequent possibility of some kind of land inheritance. Ignacio de Asso was also an intellectual of considerable calibre and the owner of a large entailed estate.

Josefa Amar's father, José Amar y Arguedas, was a doctor. Her mother, Ignacia Borbón y Vallejo de Santa Cruz (related to the royal family in name only) was also the daughter of a doctor, Miguel Borbón, whose father, Felipe de Borbón (Josefa Amar's great grandfather) wrote a treatise on medicine in 1705³. The family's medical connections do not end there⁴. Miguel Borbón's sister, who was Josefa Amar's great aunt, was married to Antonio de Borbón e Izquierdo, a colegial and Professor of Anatomy in 1704⁵. It should be pointed out that at least in the case of Josefa Amar's father and great aunt's husband, their status within the city was not limited to that of the professional classes. Both Jose Amar y Arguedas and Antonio de Borbón were university professors and had been *colegiales*, that is, they had belonged to the colegial elite (although it is not known to which colegio mayor or university they belonged). So they would have had to comply with the requirements of noble lineage and *limpieza de sangre*. Miguel de Borbón, Josefa Amar's grandfather, was a surgeon in the prestigious Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia de Zaragoza⁶, which, along with the Faculty of Medicine was famous throughout Spain for being a centre of diffusion of the latest advances in medicine.

Miguel Borbón was appointed Court Physician to King Fernando VI and went to Madrid in 1746, later to be followed by his son-in-law and daughter with their family, which included the infant Josefa Amar. José Amar y Arguedas was also appointed Court Physician to Fernando VI and Carlos III. He later became a member of the Protomedicato and vice president of the Academia Médica Matritense López-Cordón "Introducción" 11-14).

Thus you find an extended family, descendants of minor nobility from Borja, four of whom were doctors, two of whom were university professors, one a well known surgeon. Now based in the city of Zaragoza, a city with 20,000 inhabitants that had gone through a phase of social upheaval during the War of Succession. Then a son-in-law who went to Madrid to take up a post identical to that occupied by his father-in-law. So very probably the daughter who studied in Madrid would have had two Aragonese tutors. It is not difficult therefore to think of the family acting firstly as a group or within a wider group within the city and then within the Court itself. The professional abilities of each individual were not the key factor in this process.

Further information supports the argument that the kinship network made use of their extensive family and social connections, and that being of noble rank and members of the colegial elite were factors that favoured their social ascendancy.

³ Borbon (1986), see below López-Cordón (1984), p. 11.

⁴ López-Cordón (1994), p. 11, ref: A. Hernández Morejón, *Historia de la Medicina española*, 1850, t. VI.

⁵ A medical treatise was published in his name, Borbón (1725), see López-Cordón (1994), p. 12.

⁶ He wrote at least one medical treatise in Latin, Borbon (1736), see López-Cordón (1994), p. 12.

It is known that during Amar's membership of the Protomedicato he knew and worked with a fellow Aragonese, Andrés Piquer Arrufat, a well known and *ilustrado* doctor who had left his professorship of Medicine at Valencia and who had also been appointed Court Physician. Through this relationship Josefa Amar got to know and eventually married Joaquin Fuertes Piquer, who was probably a cousin of Andrés Piquer and came from the same region of Teruel (Aragon). Amar's husband had been a *colegial* of the *colegio mayor* of San Ildefonso at the University of Alcalá. However, despite belonging to the same family elite through marriage, he had studied Law. Until his eventual departure to Zaragoza he practised law in the courtroom of the Alcaldes de Casa y Corte de Madrid, and was Depository for the Monte de Piedad in the same city. He wrote a book that was notably *regalista* in tone in 1766⁷. In Zaragoza he was appointed *alcalde del crimen* of the Real Audiencia (1772), later rising to the post of *oidor* (1785). In 1786 he suffered an attack of apoplexy which in 1787 forced him to retire from office. 11 years later he died on the 3rd Oct. 1798.

The second argument is that nearly all of Josefa Amar's siblings (she was the fifth of eight baptised brothers and sisters) took up military careers or entered the Church. The eldest brother, Antonio, enlisted in the army and is known to have taken part in the Portuguese campaign of 1762, as did the Count of Aranda, where the two might have struck up some kind of friendship. He was promoted to the rank of *teniente coronel* in 1768, and later became viceroy, *capitán general* and president of the Audiencia of New Granada. Two other brothers, Rafael and José, also entered military service although they did not rise as highly through the ranks as the eldest of the family. Francisco was one member of the family who chose to take the cloth by becoming a *presbítero* in Zaragoza. It is perhaps no coincidence that the two principal figures that assisted and supported Josefa Amar in Zaragoza were in fact members of the secular clergy. It would be interesting to find out if Francisco was connected to the Seminary of San Carlos or any similar institution.

The early acceptance of the ideas and theories of the Enlightenment by Amar's extended family has been well researched, so perhaps a summary is sufficient. The medical practise in the Medical Faculty and the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia de Zaragoza, along with connections with the Court and the relationship with Andrés Piquer Arrufat created an ideal environment for Josefa Amar to acquire a very clear picture as to what the *novator* movement and the first Enlightenment consisted of. The family's medical background and its influence on her intellectual life can clearly be seen in her most famous written work, the *Discurso*. Half of the book is given over to the physical education of young girls with an almost exclusive emphasis on medical matters that range from pregnancy to care of the infant.

This intellectual hothouse in which Amar grew up and thrived should always be borne in mind for one fundamental reason: her condition as a woman at that time closed all doors to her opportunities for a *colegial* or university education, her tuition could only be on an individual basis. This state of affairs had a great deal to do with the important part that her two private tutors in Madrid played in her development. Again it is probably no coincidence that both of them were from Aragón. Antonio Berdejo, a priest, was her Greek tutor, while Rafael Casalbón, the King's Librarian, taught her Latin, French and literature. Her relationship with these two teachers probably gave her access to the

⁷ Fuertes Piquer (176), quoted by M. Gómez Uriel; see López-Cordón (1994), p. 18.

Biblioteca Real and the opportunity to learn other languages. Another important factor in her education was her opportunity to attend the Academia del Buen Gusto, founded in 1749 by Rosa Maria de Castro Centurión, Condesa de Lemos, Marquesa de Sarriá, and daughter of another powerful Aragonese nobleman, the Marquis of Ariza. The Aragonese connection is again supported by Amar's friendship with the Condesa de Montijo, the wife of the Aragonese Felipe Palafox, Duque de Híjar, whose family would later receive the earldom of Aranda since the Count was to die in 1798 without heirs. In Zaragoza Josefa Amar made use of the public library in the Dominican convent of San Ildefonso (donated by the Marquise of the Compuesta and destroyed during the siege of Zaragoza in 1808-9).

A particularly interesting question at this stage is what Amar would have encountered on her return to Zaragoza. So before exploring her intellectual activity in any greater depth, an overview of the social context is needed, and most importantly, what were the predominant social problems that the *ilustrados* tried to resolve by founding the Real Sociedad along with other social welfare initiatives.

The social reformism of the Aragonese Enlightenment

Aragonese social reformism was the product of a provincial culture, but it was not parochial in outlook. It was a response to social problems that were unique to Aragón and to others that affected the country as a whole. An analysis of Aragonese reformism serves a twofold purpose. It not only provides a picture of the local and regional ambit but can also serve as a representative model. In social terms, many of the difficulties that Zaragoza went through in the 18th c. were common to other cities of the same size and local sphere of influence within the Iberian Peninsula. Thus an analysis of this nature may well be of use for future reference.

The principal foreign influences of the Enlightenment as an intellectual movement were French and Italian, while any British influence was practically non-existent. It began to develop a political dimension in line with the phase of secular economic growth brought about by a series of mechanisms: productive zonal specialisation, price rises (urban rents, grain, land), dispossession of the peasant freeholders and copyholders. These mechanisms all had their effect on Zaragoza. To complicate matters further, the central region of Aragón was under the profound influence of a manorial system, the crushing weight of the Church in almost every sector of society, and the steady urban development of a capital city in the centre of a 'feudal sea'. The term is justifiable as an analogy of how Zaragoza was surrounded by territory subject to a seigneurial regime that that was anything but nominal in nature.

The end result was a growing casual poverty process of the small peasant landholders of the area. This phenomenon was already perceptible in the 1730s when there was an increase in the number of poor people in the city of Zaragoza, which was probably the root cause of the riots in April and May 1766 in the city. The 1766 disturbances were a widespread phenomenon throughout Spain, and, although most of them were food riots, local factors had a part to play. In the Madrid riots there was a clear undercurrent of political conspiracy fomented by the conventual clergy and certain members of the aristocracy, although both groups acted independently. In other parts of Spain the riots developed distinctly anti-feudal overtones.

Whatever the causes, this state of social unrest had a variety of political solutions at a local and national level. One solution for Zaragoza was the social policy of the *ilustrados*, for whom the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del País to launch new projects was one resource more, albeit a vital one. Another response was the appearance and development of an ‘internal’ debate about the mechanisms that dictated the grain trade, what could be done to improve the lot of the poor and what were the causes that had brought about the increase in casual poverty. Many of the greatest intellectual achievements of the Aragonese and Spanish Enlightenment are better understood when interpreted within this framework. Other efforts were made to resolve the crisis by means of tribunals and the imposition of public order, and also through political reforms of local government.

Social reformism was not a momentary reaction to a short-term crisis, but rather a steady response to a growing crisis that had its roots deeply embedded in the very nature of the society from which it came. Factors such as economic growth, the reaction of many of the clerical communities to state fiscal pressures after the *Concordato* of 1753, the growing interest of the higher peasant strata (*labradores honrados*, *herederos* of the *términos de regantes*, tenants of seigneurial rents and church tithes) in enjoying the benefits of price rises all had an effect that the *ilustrados* had long argued against. All this tended to create a new class of day labourers and paupers that chose not to remain in the country (where the *ilustrados* believed they should be) but emigrated to the cities, especially Zaragoza, in search of bread and work. There they hoped to survive through an alternating or simultaneous combination of unemployment and charity. On top of this influx from the rural districts, there was also a growing number of unemployed guild-affiliated apprentices, journeymen and skilled craftsmen; most notably amongst the artisans of Zaragoza and the rural industrial workers of the Tierra Alta of Teruel and the Jacetania and Serrablo regions of the Pyrenees. All of these sectors were producers of ‘the involuntary poor’ as some *ilustrados* rightly named them. Perhaps what the *ilustrados* did not come to realise was that the problem was not the existence of poverty itself (that had been a sad fact of urban life for centuries), but that it had reached crisis point. The number of poor had grown to such an extent that the traditional solutions such as day labouring, charity and use of public order were no longer effective. To make matters worse, no new efforts could be made to resolve the crisis without sooner or later impinging on the sensitive issues of *amortización* of lands, the taxation system, the distribution of property and the seigneurial regime.

For all these reasons, the Zaragozaan political elite, which was under considerable pressure after the riots of April and May 1766, needed to find a variety of solutions. At least four important and relatively famous social achievements are known of at present: the work of the hospitals, the reform of the Casa de Misericordia, the distribution of lands of the Canal Imperial de Aragón and a set of measures taken by the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa (the most interesting of which were the Juntas de Caridad and the Plan Gremial). I intend to study each in turn.

There were several hospitals and a large number of charitable institutions in Zaragoza in the 18th c. Many of these were *cofradías*, others were associations such as the *Hermandad de la Sangre de Cristo* and the *Congregación de los Pobres Enfermos del Santo Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia* or ‘Hermandad de la Sopa’. But the most important in terms of social welfare were

the Hospital de Huérfanos, the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia and the Casa de Misericordia.

Not much is known about the Hospital de Huérfanos, which was founded in 1543 and took the place of previous institutions. The orphans were cared for in two separate buildings that sometime in the 18th c. were joined together. Children were kept at the Hospital till the age of 15, where they were taught to read, write and work wool. Asso spoke highly of the institution and reproached the *ilustrados* for not supporting it more actively. He regarded it as much better than the Casa de Misericordia, which from an educational point of view he considered to be deplorable. In its early stages the Hospital was promoted by the city government and was provided with funding from the Cabildo Metropolitano and alms collecting. The Hospital was traditionally managed by the *sitiada* consisting of a mixed assembly made up of a canon from la Seo cathedral, two local citizens and a juryman of the city council (see Asso "Historia" 141-143).

The Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia was perhaps less significant as a social institution, but since poverty, illness and social isolation were closely interrelated, its social relevance should not be underestimated. The hospital provided care for the sick without making distinctions: civilians, soldiers, gypsies, people with severe skin disease, the mentally ill, women in childbirth and abandoned infants. Those who had no parents or whose families were too poor to feed them were kept at the hospital until they were five years old, at which age they were normally sent on to the Casa de Misericordia. The other residents were there primarily to receive medical attention, but many of them were also in a state of extreme poverty. From 1722 onwards the institution was governed by the *sitiada*, a mixed board consisting of five or six aldermen under the aegis of the Cabildo Metropolitano (two canons who were *regidores* or controllers of the institution), the higher nobility and the urban bourgeoisie (three or four aldermen) (Fernández Doctor "El Hospital" 28-29, 47-64 & 305-306).

The reform of the Casa de la Misericordia was one of the most significant measures taken to improve social conditions in Aragón. The institution was founded towards the end of the 17th c., again with the active encouragement of the city government, as a hospital to combat poverty in the city. From its inception it was used as a means to police the poor of Zaragoza, who, if found in the street, were taken and held by force if necessary, regardless of age or gender. Once there many of them were given different kinds of work to do, the most common being the making of woollen or cotton cloth. The Casa was directed by a *sitiada* or governing body made up of members of the city government, the archbishopric and the Cofradia de San Jorge, which provided the presence of the nobility. Initially costs were covered by the giving of alms, but by the turn of the century this source of income had shrunk to the point where it was dependent on the city council for support. The result was a financial crisis for the institution. The city council was in no condition to assist because of its own severe budgetary difficulties. In the 17th c. it had been forced to run up an increase in debt in the form of *censales* (titles of debt) and by the turn of the century it could no longer pay the interest. The *censales* had been acquired by ecclesiastical institutions such as the Archbishop, the Cabildo Metropolitano, local convents and monasteries due to the amount of liquid capital they had at that time.

So the Casa de Misericordia fell into the hands of the Church, as did the city government, which increasingly came under the control of clerical creditors. After 1724 the presidency of the *sitiada* of the Casa de Misericordia was permanently occupied by the archbishop. In 1734 administration of the municipal treasury was given over to a *Junta de Dirección* which consisted of members of the city government and *censalistas*. Between 1729 and 1757 the ecclesiastics also came to control the so-called *Junta de Cinco*, which was the representative body for municipal creditors. Finally in 1760, when the city council was in a state of economic collapse, the Junta de Cinco took over the *pósito*, that is the municipal granary and the wheat supply system to the city, so as to recover part of the debt until 1765. This measure explains why the price of wheat rose in the years immediately before the riot and why the Church was so active in the appeasement process that followed.

It can be seen therefore that in the years leading up to the riots, the Church, led by the archbishop, was involved in at least one event with wide-reaching social implications. What is more, it did so at a time when the pressures brought about by economic growth were filling the city with paupers and day labourers; in this respect, the supply of wheat was an issue of vital importance. All these factors should be borne in mind when seeking to understand why Ramón Pignatelli (who at that time was the Archbishop's right hand man) was given the post of alderman or member of the *sitiada* of the Casa de Misericordia in 1764. No sooner was he appointed than he set about the complete reform of the institution (1764-1768) and continued to administrate the Casa de Misericordia till his death in 1793. In order to raise money he succeeded in acquiring donations from the archbishopric, he also commissioned the construction of a bullring that would provide a steady income for the institution. Later on, Pignatelli received funds from the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, an act of generosity stemmed from their own desire to abolish the social disorder caused by mendicancy. But perhaps Pignatelli's greatest achievement was to convert the Casa de Misericordia into a large, centralised textile manufacture of woollen cloth. When he took his post, the management of textile production had fallen into a state of decay. Pignatelli immediately ceased the previous leasing agreement, took personal control of management and changed the entire production system. He brought in technological improvements, increased efficiency in the workplace and diversified production of thread and cloth. In 1773 production rose, and continued to do so till 1790. The following figures demonstrate the nature of these changes throughout the period under study. In 1724, the Casa de Misericordia had 24 handlooms and approximately 200 loom workers; in 1770 it had just one loom. By 1790 it had 28 looms with 45 weavers, 245 spinners and 366 workers involved in the spinning process of linen, hemp, worsted, burlap, and raw and dyed silk. In 1796 there were 24 looms and approximately 450 workers (Baras & Montero "Ramón Pignatelli" 97-109 passim).

The primary reason for admission into the Casa de Misericordia (at least for those who had not been sent there to serve judicially imposed sentences) was extreme poverty and the lack of any means of subsistence. The Casa de Misericordia was an important refuge for the poor, and played an essential part as a social welfare safety net during the food supply crisis. Shortly before the riot, there had been several forced levies of beggars in the city in 1765-66. A Real Cedula of 7th May 1775 made levies and press-ganging of the poor a regular event. Their purpose was twofold: to fill the ranks of the army and navy and to

stamp out what was seen to be idleness and vagrancy (Baras & Montero “Ramón Pignatelli” 97-109 passim). An indirect consequence of this was that the manufacturing output of the Casa de Misericordia was highly competitive mostly because of its extremely low labour costs. In theory a worker received one sixth of the value of his output, but in practise was more likely to receive one tenth; children received no payment at all (Baras & Montero “Ramón Pignatelli” 97-109 passim). Thus the fact that the majority of the workforce consisted of children, along with the Casa’s status as a *compañía privilegiada*, which granted it several guilds and customs privileges explain its competitiveness in the market.

The Church, which had partially run this textile industry from 1748 onwards, went on to take complete control in 1764 via Pignatelli, orientating it towards the market and away from internal consumption. This gave rise to a curious paradox. The Church, many of whose institutions had contributed towards the semi-obliteration of many skilled crafts in the mid 18th c., changed tack and through the Archbishopric and Pignatelli spent the latter part of the century reshaping the textile industry, converting it into a centralised manufacturer sector with certain privileges. The specialisation in production that marked out the Casa de Misericordia had repercussions on social thinking, which orientated policy towards the poor in terms of productive needs. One of the key repercussions of this new policy was the suppression of the municipal post of Padre de Huérfanos in 1768, whose authority was superior to that of the *sitiada* (Baras & Montero “Ramón Pignatelli” 97-108 passim).

This new model of manufacturing development, based on highly centralised production in one location and on productivity that relied on minimal labour costs, appeared to be highly successful in its early stages and attempts were made to apply it in similar institutions elsewhere. In 1767 the Consejo de Castilla provided facilities for the construction or reform of *casas de misericordia* and similar institutions. In Aragón attempts were made to set up *casas de misericordia* in Barbastro and Tarazona, which were vetoed by Pignatelli. Plans were made for a similar institution in Teruel in 1767, but were to encounter opposition from a different quarter. There the city government justifiably argued that the rural wool manufacturers of the Tierra Alta (whose cottage-based industry was in a state of crisis at that time) would benefit more from help that would maintain their own production system⁸. Towards the end of the century similar proposals were made for the establishment of a Casa de Misericordia in Huesca. The project did not go beyond the planning stage.

The evidence clearly shows then that it was a policy that attempted to resolve a social problem by means of industrialisation promoted from above. This model contrasts markedly with that of Aragón’s neighbour, Cataluña. There, industrial development was spreading as a consequence of agrarian specialisation, manufacturing growth and accumulation of private capital in the rural sector, all of which was taking shape around the commercial, manufacturing and service nucleus of Barcelona.

Ramon Pignatelli was made director of the Casa de Misericordia by the Archbishop so as to give impetus to the Church’s work in the area of social welfare. The same motive underlay its prominent role in the riot of 1766. But the Church did not limit its activities in this sphere to the Casa de Misericordia. In 1764, with the active encouragement of the Count of Aranda, Juan Badín

⁸ For further information see Tomás (1965).

presented plans for a mammoth reconstruction project for the old Canal Imperial de Aragón, which had been left unfinished since the 16th c.

The plans consisted of extending the canal to the city of Zaragoza and to utilise it as a source of irrigation. Its initial purpose as an irrigation channel was soon changed into a project for a navigation canal, which made the whole enterprise even more expensive. After being named president of the Consejo de Castilla in 1766 for the express reason of appeasing the riots, Aranda continued to boost the Canal initiative. News had spread of the project since its inception in 1764 and had unleashed speculation and appropriation of the common lands around Zaragoza⁹. The provision of water and the splitting up and sharing of land amongst the day labourers was for the urban elite another excellent way of resolving the problem of the mass of beggars, vagabonds and paupers that had filled the city. It also diminished the ever present threat they represented as a force that could unleash another and potentially more dangerous riot.

Thus, after several years delay caused by organisational hitches, Pignatelli, who had become Aranda's closest collaborator in Zaragoza, was given the post of *protector* (overall director) in 1772 and took on the management of the project. He reorganised the incurred debts, convinced the state to take responsibility for construction and converted the project into a combined irrigation and navigation canal. He also included the old Canal de Tauste (on the other side of the river Ebro) in the construction and proposed agricultural reforms that would substantially change water payments and provide new cultivable and irrigated lands, called *novales*, whose domaine belonged to the city council.

The relationship between the construction project and the impoverishment of minor landholders and journeymen was direct and constant. Income amongst the farming community living near the Ebro was increased by funds derived from the canal project. In 1784, the year when construction activity was at its height, between 6,000 to 7,000 people were working on construction of the canal. That number represented practically the entire labour force available in the rural districts between Tudela and Zaragoza. In 1782, 1783, 1784, 1786 and 1787 small plots of common land were distributed amongst residents in the city of Zaragoza by means of lots that had definite social repercussions. However, in December 1783 and January 1784 there was another food supply crisis that led to disturbances similar to those of 1766. In the summer of 1784 Pignatelli ordered the most extensive common land distributions.

The Sociedad Económica Aragonesa: an institution for social policies

One final action to take place during the Aragonese Enlightenment that would have repercussions on social welfare policy was the creation of the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del País in 1776. There had been precedents in the previous decade with the establishment of provincial academies and the creation of the Sociedad Vascongada de Amigos del País (1765). These were mostly a consequence of a manifesto: the two *Discursos* written by Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes in 1774. The central thesis of his works were based on providing stimulus to the small family business and by

⁹ See Pérez Sarrión (1984), chapters 1, 4 and 5. Also Pérez Sarrión (1996) pp. 244-263.

doing so developing a ‘popular industry’ and rural manufacturing. The ultimate objective was to increase the income of the minor landholders so that they could pay the taxes imposed by the Real Hacienda and to prevent them from migrating to the cities (“Discurso industria” & “Discurso educación”).

The reformist thinking of the times is well known along with Pignatelli’s prominent role as a social reformer. He is justifiably famous, considering that with the archbishop’s remit, he set about the complete reform of the Casa de Misericordia in 1764, and then accepted the offer of his second patron (Aranda) to manage the construction of the Canal Imperial in 1772. By this time Pignatelli had already encountered opposition from colleagues in the Cabildo Metropolitano over the question of tithes. Nonetheless, he continued to be a key figure of social reform mostly because of his status as canon and member of the nobility, which was to be a major factor in subsequent events.

The founding of the Sociedad Económica was a local initiative by a nobleman, the Marquis of Ayerbe, and a canon, Juan A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea, and came about after the city government of Zaragoza received a petition for its formation from Madrid. Local notables of the city were then called on to attend two preparatory meetings in the town hall on the 1st and 15th March 1776. It is significant that the initiative and the first meeting (which was attended by up to 71 candidates for membership) were already based on the premise that their objective was the eradication of ‘voluntary mendicancy’, which was not a localised problem:

‘Noticiosos el Marqués de Ayerbe y D. Juan A. Hernández [y Pérez] de Larrea, de las ventajas que la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País modernamente erigida en la villa y corte de Madrid solicitaba a la pública utilidad con la importante idea de proporcionar los medios de extinguir las causas radicales que sostienen la mendicidad voluntaria, tan funesta en toda la Nación’¹⁰

The sessions of the Sociedad commenced on 22nd March 1776, and from the very outset the Count of Aranda, who at that time was an ambassador in Paris, wanted to place himself at the head of the Sociedad by means of a proxy. He managed to do so for a time and had as his representative none other than the familiar figure of Ramón Pignatelli. But his paternalistic attitude was to have repercussions in the shape of a conflict with other elements of the reformist movement in Zaragoza. In the seven years that followed, the social welfare activities of the Sociedad went on in the midst of confrontations between at least two different social groups with different concepts of the Enlightenment. One group was led by the distant figure of Aranda and his representative in Zaragoza. This faction’s ideology was based on paternalism and the continued patronage of the nobility. Supporters of this faction were the most reactionary elements of the secular clergy and the majority of the Cabildo Metropolitano (the conventual clergy, who were vehemently resistant to any change whatsoever, refused to participate). The other faction consisted of a small element within the secular clergy, with J. A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea as executive and intellectual leader, and most of a flourishing urban bourgeoisie, which consisted of civil servants and members of the professional classes. This was the state of affairs that Josefa Amar and her husband encountered on their arrival in Zaragoza

¹⁰ Taken from written minutes of the Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, 1st March 1776, Archivo Municipal de Zaragoza, quoted in Jaime (1990), pp. 43-44.

In 1776 and throughout the following three decades the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa carried out important projects in the world of politics and culture, publishing reports, memoirs, journals and establishing various schools and professorships. Its publishing output was especially prolific considering its size (in this respect it was the third largest Sociedad Económica in Spain after the Matritense and the Vascongada). A total of 33 publications were either directly produced or sponsored by the Sociedad during its lifetime (Pérez Sarrión “Ciencia”). It also made a great contribution towards supporting the manufacturing industry. This subject has been researched in greater depth by J. F. Forniés (“Fuentes”).

The image of the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa has until recently been somewhat distorted by the belief that the sociedades económicas of the 18th c. were institutes for regional development. A typical picture is that of a relatively undifferentiated mass of *ilustrados* who joined together from time to time in juntas and meetings and, caught up in a whirlwind of ideas generated by new theories of science and reason that were their guiding principles, created grandiose projects for good government. Although there is an element of truth to this vision, the work of the *sociedades económicas* was much more closely related to harsher socio-economic realities. Above all they were instruments whose function was to support and develop projects that might provide answers to the grave problems caused by economic growth and extreme social inequalities. In Aragón these problems existed within a social framework that was oppressively dominated by the Church and a seigneurial regime that showed few signs of graciously handing over its trappings of power. Matters were further complicated by a State which, after two centuries of relentless competition with Britain and France, only began to show in the second half of the century any clear signs of developing a coherent economic policy that would provide the country with a basic infrastructure (Pérez Sarrión “Política hidráulica”).

I intend to argue this point by focussing on three issues of great social importance at that time: the debate about the origins of poverty; the founding of schools and professorships, especially the Junta de Caridad, and the debate about the Plan Gremial. All these events occurred between 1778-84, which was precisely when Amar and her husband were known to have been actively involved in the Sociedad. J. F. Forniés (“La política social”) has recently analysed these events against the backdrop of the social policy of the period. The enormous contribution he has made to this area of research deserves greater acknowledgement than the mere mention of his name.

The doctrinal debate within the Sociedad Económica about the origins of poverty was sparked off by a request from the Consejo de Castilla for a report on the issue. The reason for this request was the publication of a book by Tomás de Anzano about the administration of hospices¹¹. The report was prepared by a committee consisting of two clergymen from the Iglesia Metropolitana, Juan A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea and Manuel Bueso; two civil servants from the city council, Miguel de Tornos and Tomás de Lezaún, and a lawyer from the Reales Consejos, Marcos Laborda. The report was completed and issued in November 1778 and was immediately criticised by the aristocratic clique within the Sociedad Económica. Pignatelli, who was at the head of the aristocratic faction, had another report drawn up, which was signed by the then director, the Count

¹¹ Anzano (1998). For further information about Anzano, see Pérez Sarrión (1999), pp. 430-432.

of Sástago, in May 1779. Madrid's rejection of Pignatelli's alternative report led him to resign from his position as *ensor* of the Sociedad Económica. Hernández y Pérez's study was an in-depth analysis of poverty and its causes that pointed the finger at the very heart of the social framework. Numerous factors were mentioned such as entailed estates, the huge quantity of land and property owned by the Church, excessive seigneurial rights, and the vagaries of the Aragonese trade imbalance caused by the flight of no less than 7.5 million reales de vellon a year in seigneurial and clerical rents from Aragonese territory. Other commercial factors included the export of fine wools, the contraband in silk and the flooding of the local market with French and Catalan manufactured goods. He also established a direct link between these problems and the policy of construction of public works (day workers and the poor employed on public works, sharing out of irrigable lands). One of Hernández y Pérez's proposals was to further develop the Casa de Misericordia and to establish similar institutions, but with the proviso that textile manufacturing would take second place to education and job training.

Pignatelli's report, on the other hand, was not so much doctrinal as pragmatic. No overall analysis was attempted. He recommended converting the Casa de Misericordia into a large wool manufacturing centre with royal privileges and requested the right to grant titles of master craftsman to apprentices and artisans¹², which would involve intervention in the ossified practices of the local guilds. This was a foretaste of the later conflicts that would arise from the debate about the Plan Gremial.

What is patently clear is that Hernández y Pérez, who had been one of the mentors in the foundation of the Sociedad Económica, had drawn up a report that directly impinged on the private interests of the nobility as well as the most reactionary elements of the clergy. The report also personally affected Pignatelli, who, acting in Aranda's name and regarded as representative of the aristocratic *ilustrados*, believed he could directly guide the Sociedad's policy and work. The report's comments on public works were another personal reflection on Pignatelli given that he directed the Casa de Misericordia and the Canal Imperial de Aragón (again under Aranda's patronage). Thus the onset of a confrontation was clear for all to see, although it was still confined within the pages of a doctrinal debate.

Less than a year later these disagreements started to come out into the open. The huge number of beggars in Zaragoza had created such a climate of concern that in May 1780 the Sociedad Económica decided to form a Junta de Caridad based on the Junta founded in Madrid in March 1778 and other projects promoted by the King. A *junta preparatoria* was formed that went into session in November to draw up an initial report. It duly published a document with a plan for the founding of the Junta de Caridad and a date, 11th January 1781 (Forniés "La política social" 93-112). The objective of the *Plan de una Junta de Caridad* was to provide work to those without any source of income and free education for children. Most of the money needed for the Junta de Caridad to function would have to be provided by the Church, especially the Archbishopric, while other financial provisions would have to be made by the State. It would be governed by a *junta general* of 22 individuals, 6 of whom would be members of the clergy. One of them was the Archbishop, who as president of the *junta general* would have wide-ranging powers. Only two members represented the

¹² Information and reports quoted taken from Forniés (1997), pp. 56-80.

Sociedad Económica, while 13 members represented the city council, the Casa de Misericordia, the Hospital de Niños Huerfanos and the city districts. The last of these, which were referred to as the *diputaciones de barrio*, were formed simultaneously as executive bodies to control the growth in number of poor people and provide them with social assistance¹³.

Perhaps a brief survey of the members of the *junta preparatoria* and their backgrounds would be illustrative at this point. Records show that there were two canons from la Seo: Joaquín Sánchez Cutanda and Antonio Rosillo y Velarde, the first of whom presided over the *junta* and who was a confidante of the Archbishop. Juan A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea was also a canon but his political outlook differed from that of his colleagues. The lay members consisted of Pedro Pablo Beltrán, a lawyer from the Reales Consejos and two civil servants from the Real Audiencia, Arias Antonio Mon de Velarde, *oidor*, and Joaquín Fuertes Piquer, *ministro del crimen*, whose name will already be familiar as the husband of Josefa Amar y Borbón (Forniés “La política social” 100 & 108-110).

Evidently part of the proposal set forward was that the Junta de Caridad should not be under the control of the Sociedad Económica but rather under the aegis of the Archbishop, Bernardo Velarde. However this proposal did not receive unanimous support. This time, according to Forniés (“La política social” 109), the confrontation was between Hernández Pérez de Larrea, the driving force behind the idea, and Joaquín Sánchez Cutanda. Hernández Pérez de Larrea insisted that the Sociedad Económica should play a more active role. Sánchez Cutanda actively defended the prerogatives of the Archbishop, who clearly intended to take control of the Junta de Caridad, and, thanks to Pignatelli, was an influential force in the Casa de Misericordia and the Canal Imperial. All that meant his role in social policy in Zaragoza in general was simply decisive.

Thus another confrontation was brewing, on this occasion between Hernández and the apparently combined force of the magistrates of the Audiencia and the advocates of a social policy whose most prominent defenders were usually the higher nobility, but who this time were to be the Archbishop’s faction. There was nothing particularly incongruous in this as it fitted in with the nobility’s paternalist ideals, according to which the Church should continue to act out the role traditionally assigned to it. Once again the institutions managed by Pignatelli were at the centre of this new debate.

The question of authority was settled in October 1781. A report issued by the Sociedad Económica Matritense led the Consejo de Castilla to issue its own report stating that the Junta de Caridad was to be autonomous and independent of the Sociedad that had promoted its foundation. A consequence of this decision and very probably of the Plan Gremial (which I intend to discuss later in this study) was an internal conflict in the Sociedad. Certain facts seem to back this up. In 1781 Pignatelli made clear that he no longer attended the sessions. However on the 12th November 1782 there were elections for the position of director of the Sociedad Económica, and Pignatelli and the Count of Torreseca stood as candidates. Pignatelli won by 20 votes to 16, but after a short period of time stood down, giving pressures of work as a reason why¹⁴. The ordinances of the Junta de Caridad approved by the Consejo de Castilla in May 1783 established a *junta de gobierno* of 14 individuals; 2 of them were members of

¹³ For more details and the text of the original report, see Forniés (1997), pp. 289-336.

¹⁴ Sullivan (1992), pp. 103-104 and the second Forniés (1978), pp. 41-42 note 74.

the Sociedad, while 5 were clergymen and effectively controlled the institution. The Archbishop was the ultimate decision-maker, but he did not provide anything in the way of income. The Junta sought other ways of raising money such as asking for alms or generating their own income (see Forniés “La política social” 108-112) by selling cloth. It is a known fact that other *juntas de caridad* were founded in Aragón but any concrete information about them is lacking (Gómez Urdáñez “Beneficencia” passim).

As far as we know, this conflict of interests and influence could not have been mutually exclusive. The Sociedad Económica still felt that the Junta de Caridad belonged to it, it participated in its administration, and any action taken by the Junta involved members of the secular clergy and the civil service, which were precisely the same groups that supported enlightened reformism. The Archbishop himself presided over the Sociedad in the years leading up to 1808.

The Junta de Caridad directed their efforts towards the creation of schools for children where they could receive a basic education and learn a craft. It also encouraged domestic manufacturing trades such as spinning, wool weaving and other crafts with the collaboration of the wool carders’ guild. Thus, the Junta de Caridad, with hardly any physical infrastructure and working on a much less grandiose scale than the Casa de Misericordia, established a small manufacturing network based on the rural putting-out system (see Forniés “La política social” 112-113).

The foundation of an Escuela de Hilar y Tejer formed part of this project. The Escuela was really an organisation given over to the production of wool and linen, which by 1788 had 388 spinning wheels. From 1800-1804 it used 40 looms and employed 300-400 master craftsmen, weavers, dyers, bleachers, spinners and winding women. It functioned in much the same way as any other company, but under the guidance of the reformist *ilustrados* it was not driven by purely private initiative, as had been the case with the Compañía de Comercio y Fábricas since the mid 18th century. The Escuela de Hilar y Tejer was the major source of income for the Junta de Caridad through the sale of manufactured cloth. The social importance of the Escuela initiative is undeniable.

The children’s schools were a response to the Enlightenment ideal of extending education and also had a straightforward social function. In the 1780s the Junta established one boys school and eight girls schools on the outskirts of Zaragoza, which by 1800 were educating some 300 pupils. Casamayor described three of these schools after they were opened. They were for poor adults, children who had been found begging and day labourers. There they were fed and sometimes given clothing. The schools were mostly financed from donations by three neighbouring monasteries and convents: the Charterhouse of the Aula Dei, the Monastery of the Concepción and the Convent of San Lázaro, which were already attending to the same peoples’ needs by providing prodigious quantities of food at the monastery entrances at meal times. It could be said that these institutions were practising a somewhat peculiar charity of their own, since the money they gave to the schools was in part taken from what

they would have spent on the meals at the monastery doorways (*porterias monacales*)¹⁵.

The Sociedad Económica was also a driving force behind providing work for prison inmates (1786). It promoted help to the poor in need of health care and other public health initiatives (1788 onwards) and participated in the creation of the Montepío de Labradores (1796). On several occasions it took poor people off the streets of the city, and organised *sopas económicas* (charitable meals) and employment on public works during the lengthy food supply crises of 1801-1804 (see Forniés “La política social” 129-132). Zaragoza was not the only city in Spain to be active in the use of pre-existing institutions or in the creation of new ones for social welfare purposes. By way of example, in Madrid (1785) the Económica Matritense was responsible for the running of a *montepío* that was given over to flax spinning, sash weaving, cloth printing and cotton weaving, and which, that same year, with the support of the Count of Floridablanca provided work for 834 people and money equivalent to 125,055 day’s wages¹⁶.

The Sociedad was also active in other areas that are not directly related to the focal point of this study, but which are interesting from a scientific, economic, and in a broader sense, social perspective. It promoted several initiatives in the agricultural and commercial sectors, while Forniés has studied in great depth how the Sociedad encouraged activity in local manufacturing. One particularly notable action was the creation of several schools and professorships to encourage the teaching of modern subjects that the hidebound, traditionalist universities of Zaragoza and Huesca did not include in their syllabus. In 1778 it founded a School of Agriculture in Zaragoza, of which little is still known, and also the previously mentioned Escuela de Hilar. This model was applied to half a dozen other rural centres in Aragon. In 1780 it founded a School of Mathematics that in principle started out as a school for artisans, but which soon became an *escuela superior*, where mathematics, dynamics, algebra, mechanics, geography, astronomy, civil architecture, surveying and construction, and machine calculation were taught. In 1784 it founded an Escuela de Flores de Mano for embroidery in Zaragoza, and an Escuela de Dibujo, which in 1792 was given the new title of Real Academia de Nobles y Bellas Artes de San Luis. As if that was not enough the Sociedad also provided impetus to institutions studying the natural sciences: professorships in botany and chemistry (1797 onwards), the Gabinete de Historia Natural (1781 approx.) and the Jardín Botánico (1797 approx.) (Forniés “Fuentes” 290-291, 348-361 & 403-411).

However the Sociedad’s most ambitious socio-political project by far was the so-called *Plan Gremial*; this time the Sociedad Económica had set their sights on reforming the entire guilds system. The whole labour reform process, with its conflicts of interests, set backs and final outcome was to occupy seven long years of the Sociedad’s active life (1777-1784)¹⁷. The project fitted in perfectly with the openly held social concerns of the Sociedad, the debates about social policy in 1778-79, the conflicts of the period between apprentices, officers

¹⁵ See Forniés (1997), pp. 198-201 and Casamayor (1782-1833) vols. I, p. 321; II, p. 84 and 118, and III, p. 123. Quotation indirectly taken from Fernández Clemente (1973), pp 263-266.

¹⁶ Report by Joaquín de Romaña and Antonio Gálbez López Salces, Madrid, 16 Dec. 1785, British Library, Mss., Egg. 516, pp. 324-327v.

¹⁷ Forniés is once again invaluable here for background information about the vicissitudes of the Plan Gremial; see Forniés (1978), pp. 107-153, for a detailed description of the process.

and their guild masters in the out-dated Zaragozaan manufacturing sector¹⁸. The later crisis of 1789 was an exercise in harsh reality in the large textile producing zones of the Tierra Alta and Maestrazgo in Teruel.

No sooner was the Sociedad created than the members began to analyse the state of the craft guilds in Zaragoza (1777-1779) so as to establish if it conformed with the program set out in the two *Discursos* of Rodríguez Campomanes, whose doctrinal objective was to dismantle the labour and mercantile monopoly of the guilds. In January 1779 the Consejo de Castilla ordered the Sociedad Económica to draw up a report on general reform throughout Aragón. The Sociedad did so with surprising speed, with a report prepared and approved in March of the same year (which suggests they had previous work prepared and ready for inclusion). The report was duly sent to the Consejo, who did not give it its approval until three years later in April 1782. The reason for this delay is unknown. The Consejo sent the definitive version of the project to the Real Audiencia in Zaragoza, where it was finally approved in July and where the first signs of resistance to it made themselves apparent.

A Plan Gremial that was to have such extensive political consequences merits closer study. Its general aims¹⁹ were manifold. It set out to establish freedom in the fixing of prices and wages in the production sector. Other proposals were to open up the guilds, which were tightly knit and endogamous by nature, and thereby make them more flexible, and to simplify the guilds geographical allocation by suppressing many of the minor guilds. Above all, according to the *Plan gremial* what needed to be done was that the policing and inspection of guild activities should be in the hands of a number of *protectores* (inspectors) of the different trades and crafts who, to ensure impartiality, would be appointed by the Sociedad itself and not by the city council.

A project like this, whose recommendations would be applied throughout the ancient kingdom of Aragón, impinged on many private interests and from the very outset aroused ferocious opposition. Naturally the master craftsmen who controlled the networks of interests within the guilds could be relied on to fight back. But they were not the greatest danger. By losing its right to appoint the *protectores*, the city council would lose its centuries old control over the guilds, and also faced losing income from the rights it held over the exams for the title of master-craftsman, as these rights were to be suppressed. Not so long ago the Sociedad had been actively promoted by the city council, which felt that its powers were under threat. The ubiquitous Pignatelli had also made moves in 1779 to reform the guilds, but by a different route, by conceding the right to the Casa de Misericordia to give the same titles. What was being questioned this time was not only what should be done, but also who should do it and from where: the Casa de Misericordia, under Pignatelli's control, with the support of the city council, or the Sociedad Económica.

The Plan Gremial also affected the interests of the conventual clergy, the most ultra-conservative and anti-Enlightenment faction, who decided on direct opposition to the Plan. In Zaragoza there were no less than 190 *cofradías* or brotherhoods in 1771, of which 136 had their offices in monasteries. In the 18th c. there were 81 officially recorded local guilds plus a number of other trades associations that also kept their headquarters within conventual premises. The old guild structure provided the monasteries with important income from rights

¹⁸ For a summary of the question of the Zaragozaan manufacturing sector crisis, see Pérez Sarrión (1999), pp. 211-220.

¹⁹ For a more detailed picture of the Plan Gremial, see Forniés (1978), pp. 107-153.

of *estola* and pastoral aid, all of which would be lost with the reforms. To add insult to injury, the Plan Gremial dared to recommend that the newly transformed guilds should transfer their headquarters to the parishes. Two members of the commission that drew up the Plan Gremial were Hernández y Pérez de Larrea and Antonio Arteta, who also happened to be canons of the cathedral. Pastoral competition at that time between the secular and conventual clergy can only be described as fierce, so it is not difficult to imagine that the Plan was considered by the conventual faction as an attempt to take power out of their hands and give it to the parishes.

The master guildsmen, the city council and the conventual clergy were opposed to the Plan Gremial. Pignatelli was another enemy. A harsh winter and another food supply crisis came about in 1783 and, as in 1766, they were used to further political ends; in this particular case to attack the Sociedad Económica and those who had a hand in drawing up the Plan Gremial. In December the city was once again full of day labourers and poor begging for free food at the monastery entrances, in the midst of a supply crisis. Only three days before Christmas Eve, the Sociedad Económica publicly named the members of the new Junta that would put the recommendations of the Plan Gremial into effect (Joaquín Fuertes Piquer's name appears once again) (see López-Cordón "Introducción" 119 & Forniés "Fuentes" 140-141). The city wasted little time in reacting. The number of public disturbances and satirical handbills were such that that very same day an enraged *regente* of the Real Audiencia informed the Sociedad that the Plan Gremial had been suspended by order of Rodríguez Campomanes. One month later in January 1784 the two bodies responsible for food supplies, the *Real Acuerdo* of the Audiencia and the *corregidor municipal* of the city council, put an end to the crisis by giving out grain and firewood, and in May the Consejo de Castilla definitively quashed the Plan Gremial. The city council and the conventual clergy had won. They had used the guild artisans, the agricultural day labourers and the poor to destroy the most important reformist project that the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa had drawn up. The dilapidated and ossified manufacturing guilds of Aragón remained untouched.

The Plan Gremial was the culmination of conflicts garnished with personal and doctrinal differences that ended by creating an internal fracture in the Sociedad. The split was based on the insoluble differences between the higher nobility led by Aranda's spokesman Pignatelli on the one hand, and the secular clergy and the professional classes of the city, along with a sizeable number of civil servants from the Real Audiencia on the other. The latter bourgeois faction was the one that finally took control of the Sociedad.

As a finishing touch to this labyrinthine battle of interests there was the question of Pignatelli and his own ongoing plans for reform. Pignatelli had made the right noises for a Plan Gremial that the city council had rejected, he in turn needed the local support for the sharing out of common lands irrigated by the Canal Imperial. The giving out of common land to poor day labourers in the summers of 1782, 1783 and 1784 showed the reforming element within the Sociedad Económica that there was a different way of 'doing' politics: Pignatelli and the higher nobility produced results that spoke for themselves. At the same time, Pignatelli and his clique were distancing themselves from the Sociedad Económica. In 1781 he no longer attended the meetings, in 1782 he stood as candidate for the post of director, won, and later stood down. By 1783 the Sociedad was being directly and publicly derided, and Pignatelli, as a result of his running battle with the institution, stopped attending meetings and

withdrew all his support. Several members of the aristocracy followed his example and left the Sociedad Económica, one notable figure being the Count of Aranda. The vacuum left by their departure was soon filled by a growing number of civil servants, minor civil servants, and members of the higher clergy with a middle level of annual income (Forniés “La política social” 285-308). So once again it can be seen that within the world of the Enlightenment, there were two ways of understanding the concept of social action: the paternalist vision of the nobility, and the reformist ideals of the group that would nowadays be defined as the bourgeoisie.

There were other conflicts. By 1782 the forces opposing the Sociedad included the conventual clergy (an openly anti-Enlightenment group), which began to criticise anything and anyone that did not conform to its own somewhat unique understanding of what constituted social welfare. One highly interesting development at that moment was that conventual anti-reformism could at times be confused with Enlightenment thinking. An example is a famous Lenten sermon given in March 1782 by a Capuchin friar and *calificador* of the Inquisition, fray Ramón de Huesca. The sermon aroused enough interest amongst the Sociedad’s members for them to print it and make the author a member *de mérito* (honorary). The text was titled *Sermón contra el vicio de la ociosidad* (‘Sermon against the vice of idleness’). Its reasoning was utterly traditional and the author could not by any stretch of the imagination be called an *ilustrado*. What is apparent is that fray Ramón’s work was interpreted as a proposal by and for *ilustrados* when it obviously was not. It should not be forgotten that the Sociedad Económica needed to ingratiate itself with the conventual clergy at that time to gain its support for the Plan Gremial, so as to receive the consent of the Consejo de Castilla one month later. That same month the cleric Antonio Arteta, collaborator in the drawing up of the Plan Gremial with Hernández y Pérez, author of a *Discurso político* which could rightfully be called *ilustrado* and which had received an award from the Sociedad in 1779 (the text was still awaiting publication), began to distance himself from the Sociedad. His reason for doing so was almost certainly because of his opposition to the admittance of a cleric like fray Ramón de Huesca into the Sociedad Económica²⁰.

Other conflicts were to come. In 1784, with the suspension of the Plan Gremial and after the creation of a professorship in Civil Economy and Commerce, handbills and leaflets attacking the Sociedad once again appeared on the streets in July-August, and in October-December 1785. In January 1786, another source of conflict arose in the shape of the university, traditionally dominated by the conventual clergy, but this time supported by the city council and aristocrats such as the Marquis of Ayerbe. The cause of this particular skirmish was the fact that the Sociedad Económica set about creating professorships, which normally formed part of the university’s own jurisdiction. Finally in November-December 1786, another preaching friar, fray Diego de Cádiz was making his mark. In a famous sermon behind closed doors before an audience of almost 600 members of the Zaragozaan clergy, several members of the Sociedad and the full tribunal of the Inquisition, the friar denounced the propositions of the professor of Civil Economics, Lorenzo Normante, and then denounced him personally before the tribunal. This conflict was not fully resolved until April 1788. Fray Diego de Cádiz was a Capuchin and a member of

²⁰ More details in Pérez Sarrión (1985), pp. 12-14.

the Holy Office of Inquisition, as was the supposedly *ilustrado* fray Ramón de Huesca²¹. From 1787 onwards, as the Demersons have brilliantly demonstrated, the *sociedades económicas* no longer received real financial and political support from the government, although official policy appeared to remain the same. They continued to function (Demerson & Demerson) but they were no longer the driving force behind ambitious social welfare projects such as those drawn up by the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del País shortly after its inception.

Josefa Amar's activity in the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa. The importance of casual poverty

In the light of these events the work of Josefa Amar and her husband Joaquín Fuertes Piquer in the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa takes on a different meaning. As I mentioned before, Amar's activity within the Sociedad should not only be understood as the labours of a remarkable individual who lived in a world that held to the belief that women's activities should be limited to the private world and subordinate to the masculine. That is not to say that Amar was an unexceptional figure in individual terms, but it does not entirely explain her activity in a social context.

When the recently married couple arrived in Zaragoza in 1772, they were, in social terms, members of the lower orders of the nobility (or so the evidence suggests), but well connected to the titled aristocracy. They were certainly on very good terms with the *partido aragonés*, the Aragonese pressure group led by the Count of Aranda. When the Sociedad Económica was founded in 1776 and Joaquín Fuertes Piquer, who had spent four years as *alcalde del crimen* of the Real Audiencia, became a member, he soon found himself involved in the conflicts that ensued. Initially the predominant group within the Sociedad was made up of the Aragonese higher aristocracy (probably not all) led by the Count of Aranda with Pignatelli as the figurehead. The aim of this faction was to continue to maintain its leading role in a society that by definition should be considered as natural, based as it was on the traditional notion of a hierarchical order with the highest stratum occupied by the nobility. This group set out from the very beginning to assert their authority over the local promoters of the Sociedad, led by the canon Juan A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea.

The debates about the origins of poverty and what should be the social purpose of the Casa de Misericordia must have brought about a taking of sides that we still know nothing about. In January 1781 Joaquín Fuertes formed part of the *junta preparatoria* of the Junta de Caridad, along with another magistrate from the Real Audiencia and a jurist. During the confrontation between canon Hernández, who defended the Sociedad's role and Sánchez Cutanda, who represented the archbishopric's viewpoint, it can only be assumed (for want of more solid evidence) that Joaquín Fuertes was gradually forced to adopt a posture more in line with that of his colleagues and Hernández and to oppose the archbishop.

Joaquín Fuertes Piquer's reformist thinking began to take shape within the professional ambit of the Real Audiencia de Aragón (although little is known about this). Many of those who supported the Sociedad after the events of 1782-

²¹ More details in Pérez Sarrión (1985), pp. 15-17 and García Pérez (1974), pp. 299-302.

1783 came from the Audiencia. Fuertes' reformism then moved away from purely doctrinal postures and towards direct reforming action, as personified by Hernández Pérez de Larrea's leadership and his participation in the debates on the origins of poverty, the function of the Casa de Misericordia and the preparation and attempted application of the Plan Gremial. This twofold experience is most likely what drew Fuertes away from Aranda and Pignatelli's concept of the Enlightenment as stratified paternalism and towards closer contact with the social realities of the time. The gradual shift in Fuertes' thinking and alignment obviously would have had repercussions for Josefa Amar, whose circumstances forced her to follow events closely.

Josefa Amar was put forward for membership by the Junta General of the Sociedad on 11 October 1782. However the proposal did not come about as an initiative by the members but after Amar had sent her translation of Llampillas' magnum opus ("Ensayo", Sullivan "Josefa Amar" 100) to the Sociedad. This means that she had probably begun to work on the text sometime in 1779-1781, when preparations were being made for the debate about the origins of poverty, the creation of the Junta de Caridad and the Plan Gremial, all of which her husband participated in. Two members of the clergy sponsored her membership: Juan A. Hernández y Pérez de Larrea, who had been a librarian at the Real Biblioteca in Madrid (Sullivan "Josefa Amar" 100), and Antonio Berdejo, a friend of Hernández's and Amar's preceptor in the capital city when she was a student there (Amar's other preceptor in Madrid, Rafael Casalbón was also a royal librarian). Her husband was known to be collaborating with Hernández y Pérez de Larrea. Clearly then the people who were supporting Amar were the same as those who had supported her husband. Amar received three assignments from the Sociedad, or rather from Hernández himself (Sullivan "Josefa Amar" 105-112): a critique of a translation of a book by Grisellini (22.11.1782), which she did immediately. Secondly, a new translation of the same book (12.12.1782), which was published in May 1783 with an interesting preface by Hernández and Antonio Berdejo²². The third assignment was to work jointly with Eulalia de Terán²³ and find women willing to take on the management of the Escuela de Hilar al Torno (10.12.1784), which at the time was managed by eight male members of the Sociedad and received little in the way of support from other women in the city. This occurred when the aristocratic faction had severed all contact with the Sociedad Económica and massive support for the institution now came from civil servants and some members of the secular clergy. In 1785 Joaquín Fuertes Piquer was made deputy director of the Sociedad, but in 1786 he suffered a cerebral attack that eventually forced him to retire from the posts of *alcalde del crimen* of the Audiencia and director of the Sociedad in 1787.

It could be said then that the social networks that assisted the couple and their own social welfare activities, which at first were closely related to the higher nobility, were the factors that led them to a different concept of the Enlightenment. Their new ideology coincided with the change in membership within the Sociedad; after the departure of the nobility and the subsequent influx of civil servants, the couple's values corresponded to this more bourgeois outlook.

²² Grisellini (1783). The preface is one of the few texts known to have been written (in this case partly) by Hernández. It has been published in Sullivan (1992), pp. 127-130.

²³ Sister of Manuel de Terán, Baron of Lalinde.

It was only after 1784, in the few years that passed between the rupture between the aristocracy and the Sociedad and the start of the French Revolution, that Josefa Amar (now distanced from aristocratic paternalism) went one stage further and began to develop her own feminist discourse. The evidence suggests that Josefa Amar was proposed as a member of the Real Sociedad Económica Matritense in February 1786. This led to a debate in the Madrid press in April and May about women's participation, one result of which was her brief and highly critical *Memoria sobre la admisión de señoras en la Sociedad* (5 May 1786)²⁴. The reaction to this proto-feminist debate was conservative: a separate women's group called the *Junta de Damas* was formed within the Sociedad Económica Matritense by order of the King with Floridablanca's assistance (Royal Decree: 27 August 1787). Additional support came in the form of 12 applications for membership from grand dames of the aristocracy (another 52 applied before 1800) (Sullivan "Introducción" 114-115). What Amar had argued for was that women should become members without forming a separate group simply because of their own equal worth. This very same model was defended by Hernández y Pérez de Larrea in Zaragoza where, despite the order from Madrid, there was never a *Junta de Damas* to keep the female members separate.

After the combined blows of her husband's trauma and consequent condition as an invalid, and the veto of her proposals by the government, she very probably felt she had lost the battle within the *sociedades económicas* and so decided to focus her attention on the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia and her own studies. She wrote the short and critical (in terms of Enlightenment policy) *Oración gratulatoria* for the Junta de Damas of the Matritense²⁵ and prepared the second edition of her translation of Llampillas ("Ensayo"). She also wrote her most well known work *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres* (Amar "Discurso", 1790), which was considered to be such an important contribution to the fields of obstetrics and paediatrics that she was made a member of the Academy of Medicine in Barcelona. Perhaps there are other essays, translations or *discursos* of Amar's that have yet to be discovered (Sullivan "Josefa Amar" 34 & López-Cordón "Introducción" 40-41). Her husband died in 1798. Little is known of her life after that other than her intense activity with the sick at the Hospital de Nuestra Señora de Gracia, her work with the Hermandad de la Sopa and that she was in Zaragoza during the Sieges of Zaragoza. She passed away in 1833.

The evidence clearly shows that Josefa Amar was active in the Sociedad Económica Aragonesa for no longer than two years, while her husband was actively involved for eleven. Joaquin Fuertes' social position and the complex struggles that took place between 1779 and 1784 within the Sociedad led the couple to change their social philosophy. In any case, their activities had always born a closer relationship to the bourgeois reformist outlook of the group led by Hernández y Pérez de Larrea, a veteran Aragonese of the Court and mentor of Amar. She developed her most interesting reformist discourse during the few years when the group had greater room for manoeuvre (between 1782 and 1789), then for reasons that are still unknown she went on to Madrid in 1786 where her declarations made a certain impact. Her husband's illness, the determined unwillingness to accept her proposals in Madrid and the later events

²⁴ The article was published under the title *Discurso en defensa del talento de las mujeres y de su aptitud para el gobierno y otros cargos en que se emplean los hombres*.

²⁵ Amar (1787), see López-Cordón (1994).

of the Revolution were the factors that probably drove her to abandon her written work on Enlightenment politics. However, available sources give no indication of a woman who turned into a recluse, and her ongoing work in social welfare surely conceals a surprise or two for other researchers.

Zaragoza was a social microcosm where the higher aristocracy, the Church and the bourgeoisie defined what Enlightened reformism meant in their country and their own social potential through their actions in Spain. The measures each group took were frequently out of tune with the others, each institution tried different approaches and solutions. What was common to all of them was the sense of constant pursuit by the shadow of growing social pressure. The most advanced reformism was applied only for a few years, but once again it should be borne in mind that the concept of Enlightenment (as I mentioned at the beginning of this article) could be interpreted in the very broadest meaning of the word. At times too broadly, if the Sociedad's acceptance of individuals such as fray Ramón de Huesca as *ilustrados* is anything to go by. However, any attempt to understand such a seemingly contradictory act would force us to go full circle: back to an analysis of the different perceptions of the Enlightenment and its doctrines. And that is another *historia* (in the twofold meaning in Spanish) that might test the enlightened reason of any reader.

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