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Netherlands

Love of the uncommon people

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We are not indignant because Willem Alexander wants to marry the daughter of a former junior minister in a fascist government. Contrary to common wisdom in Holland, the members of the Orange family are not common people. They form one of the most important capitalist clans of Holland and are as such part of the international network of capitalist clans from all over the world. This international network has its own social environment and it is much more logical that Willem Alexander should make Maxima Zorreguieta's acquaintance than to do so with ordinary citizens of this planet like you and I.

Jorge Zorreguieta was not only an obscure dignitary in a dictatorial regime, but plays an important role in many organisations of employers in Argentina and in the world of international agricultural organizations. Just as the sons and daughters of the French seventeenth century nobility were waited upon at the palace of Versailles, the daughter of such a global capitalist has worked for some time at the Latin America desk of an international bank in New York.

The past of Jorge Zorreguieta has never been a problem in this environment. The end has always justified the means, whenever the power of these networks was threatened. Although the way in which this was done is preferably hushed up in an age of triumphant neo-liberalism.

Those who favour Jorge Zorreguieta's presence at the wedding of his daughter hush up history again. Can one forbid a father to attend the wedding of his daughter for political reasons? Exactly when it comes to family matters, the military dictatorship has shown its worst side. To this day, parents do not know what happened to their children. Sometimes the murderers of their own parents raised the children of "disappeared" political activists. The total legacy of the military regime is one of barbaric cruelty, corruption and waste, which resulted in a towering national debt, conformism, anti-Semitism and hostility towards the democratic and humanistic ideals of the Argentines.

For years those Argentines who did not want to hush up history have been threatened or called fools. Whenever the movement against all this injustice gained momentum, society was threatened with another coup. In the struggle for truth many Argentineans kept their dignity. Others regained it by showing remorse for their actions in the service of the dictatorship. But the fact that for many years the authorities have denied the gruesome facts damages the self-esteem of every Argentine concerned. Exactly this feeling of self-esteem would be hurt again if Jorge Zorreguieta were received with all regards by the Dutch government.

There is also the question of why Maxima Zorreguieta - unlike her sister, a painter who identifies with the dictatorship's victims in her art - never dissociates herself in public from this regime? And should she do so now, isn't it reasonable to suppose that she is only acting out of political expedience?

We are therefore against Maxima Zorreguieta gaining any political role and we therefore are in favour of the Dutch parliament using its constitutional right to refuse to give permission to the marriage of an heir to the throne.

Some people on the left and most on the right think that one cannot refuse to give this permission. They argue that members of the royal family have also their right to a private life. They argue that one shouldn't judge Maxima on the deeds of her father. And they also state that the events in Argentina occurred a long time ago.

These are strange arguments.

The distinguishing mark of a monarchy is the cult around the private life of the family of the person who has the political role of head of state. The distinguishing mark of a monarchy is that someone becomes head of state because of the fact that his or her father or mother was also head of state. The distinguishing mark of a monarchy is also that the history and the traditions of the royal family and the institution itself play an important role in legitimating the institution of monarchy and glorifying the royal family.

If the proponents of parliamentary consent to this marriage would take their arguments seriously, they should draw the logical conclusion and bring up for discussion the whole institute of monarchy and the cult around the Orange family.