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Heinrich Pesch (1854–1926)

Social Philosopher and Economist
The Currency of the Idea of Solidarism*

Fifty years ago – on April 1, 1926, to be exact – *Heinrich Pesch, S. J.*, the world's greatest Catholic economist, died at the age of 71. It was an unstable and critical period when he departed this world. A sane plan under which action may be taken toward social peace and public tranquility was urgently needed. *Pesch* had set forth, clearly and persuasively, the principal socio-philosophical and economic elements on which such a plan or system should be constructed. However, the political climate, tending as it did toward extreme “solutions”, was not conducive to the dissemination and acceptance of balanced views. When, on May 15, 1931, the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* appeared, Catholic social thinkers and actionists recognized at once in it *Pesch's* “Solidarism”, that had in fact inspired the drafters – Frs. *O. v. Nell-Breuning, S. J.*, and *Gustav Gundlach, S. J.*, close associates of (the late) Fr. *Pesch* – of this papal letter. But one of its guiding conceptions, namely that of a reconstruction of the social economy along the lines of corporate organization and functional representation, never received much more than an academic discussion.

For the generation of German Catholics who grew up during the Nazi regime and World War II, *Pesch* and Solidarism, if they know anything at all about it, are things of the past, hardly more than an interesting event in the history of Catholic social thought. Surely, some five years after his death, his ideas, as was said above, still shone through the encyclical *On Reconstructing the Social Order*. It is also true that *Oswald von Nell-Breuning, S. J.*, and *Gustav Gundlach, S. J.*, in their writings and lecturing continued to refer to and remind their audiences of their great predecessor. And so did other German Catholic social thinkers. But these discourses seemed to remain somewhat academic, having little if any immediate or practical bea-

* Dieser Aufsatz wurde im Interesse deutscher Leser unwesentlich gekürzt.

ring. Social actionists, legislators, party functionaries, journalists, campaigners, reformers, etc. did, it is true, at times make allusions to and publicized what they assumed to be *Pesch's* Solidarism. Actually few of them seem ever to have read his books, studied his system and really knew what they were talking about. The term "Solidarism" was simply looked upon as a convenient catchword or party cry to designate something that was neither capitalism nor communism.

I. PESCH APPRECIATED IN AMERICA

At the 25th anniversary of *Pesch's* death, in 1951, it was American Jesuits who made a serious and decided effort to draw the attention of American Catholics to *Pesch* and his teachings. They dedicated an entire issue of their monthly *Social Order* (I/4, April 1951) to the memory of *Pesch*. The special editor of that particular issue was a Father *Richard E. Mulcahy, S. J.*, now chairman of the Department of Economics of the University of San Francisco, California, who in 1949 had made a special research trip to Europe to gather material for a Ph. D. dissertation on *Pesch*. Significantly, only two native Americans were contributors to that number, viz., Father *Mulcahy* himself and Fr. *Jacques E. Yenni, S. J.*, professor of economics at Loyola University in New Orleans, Louisiana. The other collaborators on that issue were *Gustav Gundlach, S. J.*, of the Gregorian University in Rome, *Oswald von Nell-Breuning, S. J.*, of the Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology, St. Georgen, in Frankfurt (M), Germany, Professor *Goetz A. Briefs*, Georgetown University, Washington, D. C., and *Briefs'* former assistant, *Franz H. Mueller*, author of this article, then chairman of the Department of Economics of the College of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, Minn., who as a student in Berlin and Cologne was fortunate enough to have *Pesch* as his paternal friend. The small number of Americans able and ready to study and comment on *Pesch's* teachings is to a large extent explained by the fact that none of *Pesch's* works has hither to been translated into English and that relatively few American social scientists seem to read German with ease and benefit. The learned economist *Bernard W. Dempsey, S. J.* (1903–1960), professor of economics at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis. and at St. Louis University, Saint Louis, Mo., is said to have at one time planned to have *Pesch's* 5-volume *Lehrbuch* of nearly 4000 pages translated into English. Dr. *Joh. Stemmler* (now business-manager of the *Bund katholischer Unter-*

nehmer, a German association of Catholic businessmen, with headquarters in Cologne) and (the late) *Peter-Paul Wolter*, both exchange students from Germany at St. Louis University, were supposed to make a beginning of this immense job. 26 years ago, *Stemmler* actually translated a whole chapter, consisting of several large subdivisions.

Father *Dempsey*, under whose direction this was done, died and it is not known what became of this translation project.

Pesch's pamphlet of 32 pages, *Christlicher Solidarismus und soziales Arbeitssystem* (Berlin 1920) has recently been translated by Dr. *Rupert J. Ederer*, professor of economics at the State University College, Buffalo, N. Y., German-born, American-reared champion of *Pesch*. His translation was published in *Social Justice Review*, official organ of the Catholic Central Union of America, originally a federation of Catholic German American benevolent fraternities¹. *Ederer's* translation will soon be re-published in pamphlet form.

My own translation of a newspaper article by *Pesch*, presenting his ideas in a nutshell, as it were, published in the St. Paul, Minnesota weekly *The Wanderer* (originally a German-language newspaper, now an ultra-conservative and traditionalist weekly) on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of *Pesch's* death, appears elsewhere in this essay².

The absence of any other translation, especially of *Pesch's* larger works, must not be interpreted to mean that he was some kind of a stranger to Catholic Americans interested in social and economic issues. Long before a special edition of *Social Order* had been dedicated to *Pesch*, there existed in the United States a veritable *Pesch*-tradition. Perhaps the most effective agent in fostering it was the aforementioned *Central Verein*, especially the Director of its Central Bureau, *Frederick P. Kenkel* (1863-1952)³, son of German political refugees of the 1848³. The Church in America, naturally, had no tradition along the lines of Catholic social thought. American Catholicism thus, was looking for guidance not only from Rome but also

¹ Vol. 68, No. 11, March 1976, pp. 372-383.

² *Germania*, political daily, main organ of the German Center Party, Berlin Sept. 27/28, 1921; translation in *The Wanderer*, vol. XXI, No. 13, March 29, 1951.

³ Cf. Sr. *M. Liguori-Brophy*, B. V. M., Ph. D., *The Social Thought of the German Roman Catholic Central Verein*, Washington, D. C. 1941, p. 70; Sr. *M. Elizabeth Dye*, O. S. U., *By Their Fruits*, Greenwich, N. Y., 1960; *Franz H. Mueller*, *The Church and the Social Question*, in: *Jos. N. Moody and J. G. Lawler*, Editors, *The Challenge of Mater et Magistra*, New York 1963, pp. 134-136.

from fellow-Catholics in Europe, both in England and on the Continent. To explain in greater depth the reasons why in America there did not exist, for a long time, a Catholic social movement of its own would amount almost to writing a history of the Church in the United States. *Werner Sombart* (1863–1941), after he had visited the 1904 World Fair in St. Louis, Mo., wrote a very thought-provoking booklet entitled *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?* (1905). Today, we would, of course, have to change that title to read *Why was there no Socialism in the United States?* A similar monograph could (and should) be written on the question: Why was there but a ripple of indigenous Catholic social movement in North America before the Great Depression⁴? In the teaching staff of the Jesuit university of St. Louis, the German element had for a long time been quite strong. Among its professors, not a few were German-born, others were of German descent or came from regions (the so-called “German Belt”) in the United States where German had been spoken until World War I. Two blocks from St. Louis University, there was (and is) the Central Bureau, headquarters of the originally purely German “Central Verein”, referred to before. In both places, the spirit of Bishop *Wm. E. von Ketteler* and *Leo XIII* was very much alive. It was probably the German Jesuits at the University who had, as it were, discovered *Heinrich Pesch*.

One of the younger set of American Jesuits who were interested in *Pesch*, was particularly eager to hear from me about *Pesch*: *Richard E. Mulcahy*, then still a Jesuit scholastic. Years later, *Mulcahy* decided to write a Ph. D. dissertation on *Pesch*'s economic theories. It is to the credit of the economists at the University of California in Berkeley and to his superiors in the Society of Jesus that they granted him their support he needed to research a man and his teachings both of which were all but unknown to either. Among those whom *Mulcahy* interviewed were *F. P. Kenkel*, *Gustav Gundlach*, *O. v. Nell-Breuning*, *Edward H. Chamberlin* of Harvard University, a Catholic and one of the truly outstanding economists of the United States. He, the “foreigner”, then drew up the first probably complete bibliography of everything *Pesch* ever published. This long list will be found at the end of this article.

The fruit of his long and truly painstaking research *Mulcahy* used for his dissertation and published in a book titled *The Economics of Hein-*

⁴ Cf. *F. H. Mueller, loc. cit.*, pp. 83 ff., 91–97, 106–116, 119–126, 132–137.

rich Pesch (Henry Holt & Comp., New York 1952, XII, 228p)^{4a}. It has no equal in the German or, for that matter, any other non-English language. Its special merits consist in the fact that it presents *Pesch's* teachings in the light of modern economic theory. It enables Anglo-American economists, used to a rather different approach, to understand and appreciate the principles which *Pesch* had laid down in his *Lehrbuch* (literally instruction book or set of books), a veritable *Summa Oeconomica*. Paradoxically, there is a chance that an updated German translation of *Mulcahy's* book could bring about a revived interest in *Pesch* in his own homeland.

In addition to *Mulcahy's* book there were other literary production dealing with *Pesch* such as contributions to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*⁵, the *Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home*⁶, the *Review of Social Economy*⁷, the *Historical Bulletin* of St. Louis University⁸, the Jesuit quarterly *Thought* of Fordham University⁹, the *Social Justice Review*¹⁰, the *Forum*¹¹, and numerous small periodicals which cannot possibly be all listed in this essay.

One of the best presentations of *Pesch's* teachings is a paper which *Jos. B. Schuyler, S. J.*, now at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, con-

^{4a} Three years earlier, *Mulcahy* published a high-quality article on The Welfare Economics of Heinrich Pesch. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. LXIII, No. 3 (Aug. 1949), pp. 342-360.

⁵ *Leo C. Brown, S. J.*, *Catholic Economic Thought*, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York 1967, vol. V, p. 80 f.; *Jean-Yves Calvez*, *Social Justice*, *ibid.*, vol. XIII, p. 318; *John E. Fitzsimons*, *Social Movements*, *Catholic*, vol. XIII, p. 326 *ibid.*; *Rich. E. Mulcahy, S. J.*, *Pesch*, *Heinrich*, *ibid.*, vol. XI, p. 195; *Jeremiah J. Newman*, *Social Thought*, *History of*, *ibid.*, vol. XIII, p. 350; *Heinrich A. Rommen*, *The State*, *ibid.*, vol. XIII, p. 649.

⁶ *Franz H. Mueller*, *Solidarism*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home*, vol. 10, New York, N. Y. 1965, pp. 215-216.

⁷ *Franz H. Mueller*, *The Principle of Solidarity in the Teachings of Father Heinrich Pesch, S. J.*, *Review of Social Economy*, vol. IV, No. 1, 1946; *Rich. E. Mulcahy, Sr. M. Thomasine Cusack, O. P.*, *Franz H. Mueller*, *The Peschian Value Paradox*, *Review of Social Economy*, vol. X, No. 1, March 1952.

⁸ *Joseph B. Schuyler, S. J.*, *Pesch and Christian Solidarism*, *The Historical Bulletin*, vol. XXII, March 1944, No. 3, pp. 53-54 (St. Louis University).

⁹ *Franz H. Mueller*, *Rejecting Right and Left*, *Thought*, Fordham University, vol. XXVI, No. 103, 1951/52, pp. 485-500.

¹⁰ *Rupert J. Ederer*, *Heinrich Pesch, S. J., 1864-1926*, *Social Justice Review*, vol. 68, No. 11, March 1976, pp. 372 f. *The Social Justice Review*, formerly *Centralblatt und Social Justice*, carried numerous articles on *Pesch* and *Solidarism*. For the earlier issues there exists at the Central Bureau in St. Louis, Mo. (3835 Westminster Place) a typewritten index that may be consulted in the Library of the Central Bureau only.

¹¹ *O. v. Nell-Breuning, S. J.*, *Heinrich Pesch Today*, *The Forum*, Spring 1976, *Dep. of Economics*, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, pp. 43-46.

tributed to the omnibus volume *Social Theorists*, Milwaukee 1953, edited by Clement S. Mihanovich, Saint Louis University (cf. pp. 216–243, 484f). It has the advantage of not being restricted to the economic teachings of *Pesch*, but emphasizing his special role in developing a socio-philosophical foundation both for economics as theory and as policy, i. e., as an attempt at applying principles to problems and coming to grips with the issues evolving in the everyday world.

When the older generation of American “Solidarists” was about to retire from the scene, a new one, made up largely of Catholic political refugees from (Nazi-)Germany and Austria was ready to appear on the historical stage. Interestingly, several members of the German Conference of Solidarists social scientists, known as the *Königswinterer Kreis* (according to the town on the Rhine where they met from time to time), who did preparatory work for *Quadragesimo anno*, came to the United States: Theodor *Brauer* (1880–1942), formerly of the University of Cologne, who became chairman of the Department of Economics of the College of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, Minn.; *Goetz A. Briefs* (1885–1974), formerly of the Graduate School of Engineering, Berlin-Charlottenburg, then professor of labor economics at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C.; *Heinrich A. Rommen* (1897–1967), former moderator of the *Königswinterer Kreis* and executive of the Catholic People’s Union of Germany, then professor of politology at the College of St. Thomas and, later, at Georgetown University, *Franz H. Mueller* (* 1900), formerly assistant to *T. Brauer* and *G. Briefs*, then Assistant Director of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Cologne, later chairman of the Department of Economics at the College of St. Thomas (successor to *T. Brauer*). Among the Catholic refugees from Germany there were some not directly connected with the *Königswinterer Kreis* or the Solidarist school of social thought who nevertheless transmitted ideas of German social Catholicism when and wherever they had an opportunity to share their rich heritage with their native American fellow-Catholics. Among them: *Ferd. A. Hermens* (* 1906), former assistant to *Goetz Briefs*, then professor of politology at Notre Dame University, later at the University of Cologne; *Rudolf Schwenger* (1901–1947), former assistant to *Goetz Briefs*, then chairman of the Department of Sociology, the College of St. Thomas; *Egbert L. Munzer* (1897–1948), formerly at the German Ministry of National Economy, then professor of economics at Laval University, Quebec,

Canada; Dr. *Edgar Alexander* (1902–1970), formerly member of the Committee on Cultural Affairs of the German Center Party, later free-lance writer in the area of history and sociology¹².

There is no sense in concealing the fact at the 50th anniversary of *Pesch's* death, Catholic social theorists and social actionists in both Europe and the United States took a less than lively interest in both the man and his teaching.

II. DOES PESCH ADDRESS THE SPIRIT OF OUR TIME?

The question may now be asked: Why this restrained response among leading Catholics of learning and action when called upon to commemorate *Pesch* and to demonstrate the timeliness of his essential teachings? What accounts for their silence or somewhat perplexed and embarrassed reaction? One reason, obviously, is some sort of "generation gap". The era of Nazi suppression of social and political Catholicism did take its toll, interfering as it did, with the continuity of thought and action and with their intercontinental transmission. While some leaders managed to escape and in exile to preserve and convey inherited values and ideas, many more were condemned either to death or to silence. During the reign of *Hitler*, there grew up a generation that had never heard of Catholic social thought. Following World War II, those who had to inform themselves professionally about the social teachings and policies of the past had to do it not through personal teachings or contacts but through reading the old "classics" and articles whose "tenor" may occasionally have struck them as quite different from their own way of thinking. This difference in approach and outlook may in part be explained by a far-reaching dissimilarity of issues and problems faced by the two generations.

Unable and, unfortunately, sometimes even unwilling to discover what is timeless in *Pesch's* teachings and to rethink and recast what may yet prove to be timely, not a few writers and educators simply

¹² *Alexander's* contribution to *Church and Society / Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements 1789–1950*, New York 1953, pp. 325–583 is an excellent presentation of the social and political movements and ideas in German and Austrian Catholicism. *Pesch* and *Solidarism* are referred to no less than 19 times, under "Documents" he added long translated excerpts from *Pesch's* writings. His valuable and meritorious anthology has the disadvantage of being somewhat arbitrarily composed; the sources are not clearly identified.

could not establish a positive relationship between themselves and "traditional" social thought and mentality. Besides, for many it was exactly the apparent timelessness of the natural-law approach of many of the older generation to which they felt an aversion. There was a new trend toward the "concrete", and widespread skepticism toward anything doctrinal and "abstracting" from what appears to be historically unique. This is not the place to review the recent crisis of Catholic social thought and of the Catholic social movement. Though there may now be a renaissance of both, it is unlikely to mean a mere return to the past, a recapitulation of past experiences or a simple revival of pre-World War II Catholic social teaching and action. Situations have indeed changed, problems do differ, improved empirical research does impart new insights, new phenomena and methodologies necessitate changes and augmentation of conceptual interpretation as well as terminology. Even the magisterial Church seems to approach social problems from a more pastoral than doctrinal point of view.

Much of what one finds in *Pesch's* text is, no doubt, now more or less obsolete. This applies particularly to some of the practical problems he dealt with and which are no longer pressing if they still exist at all. *Johannes Messner* in his commemorative article for the *Review of Social Economy*, October 1976, has drawn attention to the fact that today we have arrived at new insights, as, for instance, in the function of money. There are now types of inflation which simply no longer fit in *Pesch's* frame of reference. We have a better appreciation of the significance and function of fiscal policies. We have become more aware of some sort of hidden re-distribution of income, namely by the income policies of special interest groups that expropriate other groups which are at the mercy of their monopolistic or oligopolistic power. With the liberation of the Third World we realize that *Pesch's* national-economic outlook no longer provides fully satisfactory answers to worldwide economic problems. We realize the international dimensions and implications of presentday economic operations. The "superannuation" of the populations of the West and the rapid growth of the world population has added new and urgent aspects to the social question. We cannot expect *Pesch* to have been aware of or anticipated the environmental pollution by manufacturing industries, the rapid depletion of natural resources or the need for a reorganization of international trade to meet the needs of the developing third-

world countries. When *Pesch* wrote his *Lehrbuch*, little if anything was known about nuclear energy, automation, cybernation, genetic engineering, the conquest of space, instant communication, etc. This list could be extended by many pages and it would still not tell the whole story of the far-reaching changes that have taken place since *Pesch* brought his work to a conclusion. But it should be obvious that this does not apply merely to *Pesch* but to all authors of books on economic principles and problems written at his time. What needs to be pointed out with great emphasis, however, is the fact that *Pesch* himself would have been the first to acknowledge that his work would eventually no longer be up-to-date in every respect. Today, he would encourage the younger generation of Catholic economists and sociologists to do what he did in his own time: to avail themselves of the fruits of the most advanced contemporary research.

It would, then, be a complete perversion of facts and ends to draw from the datedness of some of *Pesch's* writings the conclusion that his teachings are now no longer acceptable. As *O. v. Nell-Breuning* has pointed out: at a time when Catholicism had little to offer in the way of theory that would match in sense of purpose the teachings of the classical laissez-faire economists and the Marxian communists, *Pesch* recognized the urgent need for a truly scholarly approach to the problems of social and economic life¹³.

III. WHAT IS SOLIDARISM?

What was particularly missing until the time of *Pesch* among economic thinkers and writers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, was a philosophical basis for economic theory as well as economic policy. *Pesch* recognized at once that the socio-philosophical premises and postulates which must precede any economic teaching and action, presuppose a right concept of man. What one thinks about the nature of man, he felt, clearly determines – provided, of course, one reasons consistently – one's concept of society, which, in turn, gives direction to one's economic views. *Pesch* called "his" social philosophy "Solidarism", its application to the economy a "Social System of Industry", which recognizes human industry in its original sense, viz., systematic labor for the creation of utilities to be the primary cause of the wealth or material welfare of nations. By calling this system an anthropocentric-teleological one, he made it clear that in a sane

¹³ Cf. *The Forum*, Spring Issue 1976, pp. 43 f. (see note No. 16).

and sound economic system man is the starting point, center and, above all, the very purpose of all economic activity. In other words, the human person is the efficient and final cause of the economic process. Where man and his productive efforts are reduced to a mere means, expedient or "occasion", which is to say, where the hierarchy of ends and values has been turned upside down, there, in the long run, cannot but be disorganization, confusion and, finally, chaos.

Of the factors of production, there is one which is of decisive importance: man and his conscious activity or directed efforts expended to increase the capacity of goods to satisfy human wants. At the root of disruption of an economic system is always a false philosophical anthropology, a fallacious concept of man. Individualism conceives him as nothing but a member or functionary of a social whole. In other words, man either does not recognize his social nature and obligation toward his fellowmen and the common good at all, or he has no concept whatsoever of his relative autonomy as a human person and allows himself to be offered or is, in fact, sacrificed on the altar of the collectivity. The truth cannot but be equidistant from both extremes. But the *via media* between these excesses is anything but a mere compromise between what is inordinate, a blending of two evils. It is, rather, a recognition of the true nature of man, who is equi-essentially an individual person and – in consequence of the essentially dialogical nature of the human mind – also a thou-related, social being. In other words, solidarism is primarily a matter of "being" in the metaphysical sense of the term, and only secondarily and in consequence of it, a matter of action or operation, concerning the latter's conformity with the nature of man and society. The term "Solidarism" is not an arbitrary invention but clearly expressive of *Pesch's* quasi-dialectic social philosophy, based on the assumption that there is a creative polarity between person and society. Borrowed from the terminology of Roman law, where *solidum* denotes a joint and indivisible liability, typical for, but not restricted to, cases of joint tort or delict, it is perhaps most simply expressed in the phrase: One for All and All for One.

At this point it may seem advisable to let *Pesch* himself speak, as it were. For the benefit of those for whom the topic of this essay is quite novel, we will reproduce a newspaper article which *Pesch* wrote some 55 years ago and in which he attempted to present in a nutshell, as it were, the guiding conceptions of his theory.

»In jeder vollkommen ausgebildeten Wissenschaft vom menschlichen Leben und Handeln pflegt man einen oder mehrere Grundsätze aufzustellen, auf die alles andere sich stützt, die alles andere bestimmen. Von der theoretischen Entwicklung jener Grundsätze ist die praktische Anwendung und Verwertung derselben wohl zu unterscheiden. Leute, die in den Grundsätzen übereinstimmen, können doch bezüglich ihrer Anwendung verschiedener Meinung sein.

In der Volkswirtschaftslehre hatte lange eine rein empirische Betrachtung vorgeherrscht. Die theoretisch-vertiefende Betrachtung trat allzu sehr zurück. Heute fordert man, daß die Nationalökonomie wieder in die Schule der Philosophie gehe. Die einen denken dabei insbesondere an die Erkenntnistheorie und Logik (Einfluß der Rickertschen Methodenlehre auf die Wirtschaftswissenschaft). Für andere handelt es sich vornehmlich um sozialphilosophische und ethische Grundanschauungen, Grundsätze, Lehren, die für den gesamten volkswirtschaftlichen Prozeß von größter praktischer Bedeutung sind. Der christliche Solidarismus ist nun nichts anderes, als die systematische Zusammenfassung solcher Grundanschauungen und Grundsätze. Es wäre darum verfehlt, wollte man irgendwelche wirklichen oder vermeintlichen Anwendungen mit dem sozialphilosophischen System des christlichen Solidarismus identifizieren, z. B. die neuerdings viel besprochene Werkgenossenschaft schlechthin als »christlichen Solidarismus« bezeichnen.

Das Wort »Solidarität« ist oft mißbraucht worden. Man darf darum nicht glauben, daß überall, wo von einer gewissen Solidarität die Rede ist, speziell der christliche Solidarismus in Frage komme. Selbst wirkliche Anwendungsversuche der christlichen Grundsätze müssen darauf geprüft werden, ob die vorgeschlagene Anwendung auch eine richtige, und überdies, ob sie praktisch möglich, überhaupt oder in besonderen, gegebenen Verhältnissen praktisch zweckmäßig sei. Der christliche Solidarismus fordert eben keine gewagten und zweifelhaften Experimente. Was er erstrebt, ist lediglich die Durchdringung des Wirtschaftslebens mit dem Geiste echten Christentums.

Auf eine kritische Untersuchung und Prüfung praktischer Anwendungsversuche wollen wir hier nicht eingehen, beschränken uns vielmehr darauf, die allgemeinen Grundanschauungen und Grundsätze des christlichen Solidarismus in aller Kürze noch einmal darzulegen. Albert Schäffle führte in der Einleitung des ersten Bandes von »Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers« das gesamte Wirtschaftsleben auf

zwei Gegenströmungen zurück: die ausschließlich auf Privatnutzungen gerichtete des Individualismus und die ausschließlich auf Gemeinnutzen gerichtete des Kollektivismus. Daß zwischen beiden Richtungen ein Ausgleich notwendig sei, wurde von vielen erkannt, von Adolf Wagner besonders scharf betont. Der christliche Solidarismus stellt nun einen Versuch solchen Ausgleichs dar, wobei das Extreme des individualistischen und kollektivistischen Systems abgestreift, das in beiden Berechtigte vereint wird.

Die Grundanschauungen des christlichen Solidarismus, wie sie auch in anderen Publikationen bereits zusammengefaßt wurden, sind folgende:

1. Der Mensch Herr der Welt. Diese Herrschaft ist Gemeingut aller Menschen, wie die menschliche Natur Gemeingut ist. Allen Menschen muß die äußere Natur dienen zur Befriedigung ihrer Bedürfnisse.
2. Der arbeitende Mensch ist Herr der Welt. Die Arbeit das unerläßliche Mittel zur Weltbeherrschung, die wirtschaftliche Arbeit das notwendige Mittel zur Bedarfsversorgung. Dem arbeitenden Menschen dient die Sachenwelt, dienen die Naturkräfte. Sie liefern ihm Gegenstand, Mittel, Bedingungen seiner wirtschaftlichen Tätigkeit. Niemals ist der Mensch dabei bloßes Objekt oder Werkzeug. Auch der einfachste Arbeiter nimmt teil an der menschlichen Subjektstellung, bleibt Subjekt und Ziel der wirtschaftlichen Tätigkeit (anthropozentrisch-teleologisches Prinzip).

Die Arbeit ist natürliche Notwendigkeit. Ohne Arbeit keine Befriedigung der Bedürfnisse, kein Fortschritt. Die Arbeit ist aber auch des Menschen Pflicht, ist Individualgesetz für jeden einzelnen, körperliche Arbeit ein auf der Menschheit ruhendes Menschheitsgesetz. Die Arbeit ist Recht, Ehre, Freude des Menschen. Unter allem, was den Menschen drückt, ist geordnete Arbeit der geringste Druck.

Nicht bloß die landwirtschaftliche, oder die industrielle und kommerzielle Tätigkeit ist Ursache der nationalen Wohlfahrt, sondern die menschliche Arbeit, Betriebsamkeit, schlechthin muß als Hauptursache der materiellen Volkswohlfahrt anerkannt werden. Wirtschaftlich vollwertig ist regelmäßig nur diejenige Nation, die alle Produktivkräfte in sich vereint, richtig organisiert nur diejenige, die sie alle bei Lebenskraft erhält. Menschliche Arbeit ist wieder die wichtigste Ursache bei der Wiederaufrichtung der Wohlfahrt eines durch schweres Unglück betroffenen Volkes. »Alle menschliche Arbeit, die Werte schafft oder erhält, welche der menschlichen Natur und ihren

Bestimmungen gemäß und deshalb geeignet sind, überindividuelle Gemeinschaftswerte zu sein und zu bleiben, das ist Kulturarbeit. Kulturgüter sind eben diese Werte, die Kultur selbst sowohl die Arbeit wie ihre Erträge«. (R. von Nostitz-Rieneck, Kulturgeschichte, Stimmen der Zeit 101 (1921) 292.)

3. Der arbeitende Mensch Herr der Welt inmitten der Gesellschaft. Hier, in der Gesellschaft, wird der Mensch erst vollkommen zum Herrn der Welt, indem er mit seinesgleichen zusammenwirkt in Arbeitsteilung und Arbeitsgemeinschaft.

Aus der Arbeitsteilung erwächst die soziale Gliederung der Gesellschaft (vertikal nach der Rangordnung der Stände und horizontal, innerhalb der Stände nach Klassen, entsprechend der besonderen Leistung der unteren, mittleren, oberen Schicht, unter Wahrung des Primates der geistigen Leistung.) Diese soziale Gliederung mag im Laufe der Geschichte in ihrer konkreten Ausbildung oft durch soziale und wirtschaftliche Machtverhältnisse beeinflusst worden sein. Es ist aber zu viel gesagt, wenn Oppenheimer meint: »Nicht ökonomische Beziehungen zwischen Freien und Gleichberechtigten, sondern politische Beziehungen zwischen Siegern und Unterworfenen haben die sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Klassen geschaffen.« Die Gliederung nach Ständen und Klassen in Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft ist nicht bloßes Ergebnis der Macht, sondern ist natürliches Erfordernis und notwendiges Ergebnis gesellschaftlicher und wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung. Dabei werden die Klassen nicht als bloße Besitzschichtung im Sinne des Sozialismus (Bourgeoisie und Proletariat), sondern in erster Linie als Leistungsschichtung innerhalb des gleichen Berufes verstanden.

Eine richtige historische Auffassung wird ferner auch in den drei Grundpfeilern der gesellschaftlichen Ordnung, in Familie, Staat, Privateigentum nicht lediglich das Produkt von Zwang und Gewalt erblicken, von Gewalteigentum und Zwangsstaat sprechen dürfen. Es handelt sich dabei vielmehr um unerläßliche Bedingungen jeder kulturellen Entwicklung. Gewalteigentum und Gewaltstaat finden sich beim Kommunismus (Bolschewismus), nicht aber mit Notwendigkeit bei der Ausbildung des Staates als solcher und der Privateigentumsinstitution als solcher. Die naturrechtliche Begründung von Familie, Staat, Privateigentum blieb bis heute unwiderlegt¹⁴.

¹⁴ Cf. note No. 2.

It goes without saying that those who continued the work of Father *Pesch*, namely Frs. *O. v. Nell-Breuning* and *Gustav Gundlach*, not only brought his theories up to date, but also presented them in language more attuned to the language of their own day. Both, however, have emphasized that the importance of *Pesch* and his teachings for our time is not a mere matter of semantics or mental "wave-length". Whatever our own viewpoint and approach may be, there is no denying the fact that, as *Pesch* began his scholarly activity, Catholic social doctrine as doctrine, was rudimentary at best. The teachings and writings even of men like *Franz v. Bader*, *Franz J. v. Buss*, *Edmund Jörg*, *W. E. v. Ketteler*, *Adolph Kolping*, *Adam Müller*, *Jos. M. v. Radowitz*, *Carl v. Vogelsang*, *Albert M. Weiss*, *O. P.*, to name only some of the leaders in the German-speaking countries, were not meant to be systematic and definitive presentations. When *Pesch* began to write his 2-volume work on economic liberalism, socialism and the Christian social order¹⁵, Rome, at long last, defined its position vis-a-vis the social question in *Leo XIII's* encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891). It was at this critical juncture in the history of social thought that *Pesch* took the decisive step of not only postulating the necessity of answering the social question, but of also contributing to that overdue reply himself and, it is true, in a scientific manner. He realized that to cope with and to counteract the ideologies of economic liberalism and Marxism, and do so effectively, two steps had of necessity to be taken, first, acquiring a thorough knowledge of the everchanging facts of the situation, and, second, developing a social philosophy capable of competently meeting the ideologies of the right and the left.

He considered it his own special task to inquire, as *Adam Smith* proposed, into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. Long before there was any discussion about the ordinate autonomy of the various cultural spheres, especially, the different sciences, *Pesch* stressed the need for a clear distinction between the so-called "formal objects" of ethics and the empirical social sciences. While they all share the same material object of study, namely man and society, as external and indeterminate reality, each science studies it under a specialized viewpoint, i.e., with regard to a specific and distinct information or definite data desired. The manner in which economics

¹⁵ Cf. *Heinrich Pesch*, *Liberalismus, Socialismus und christliche Gesellschaftsordnung*, in: *Die soziale Frage beleuchtet durch die Stimmen aus Maria-Laach*, 3 volumes, Freiburg i. B., 1900-1901.

probes and analyzes social reality differs from but does not contradict that under which, e.g., social and economic ethics proceed Economics as a practical social science is specifically interested in the aptness or suitability of certain interhuman action, aiming, as it "should", at the material welfare of human society in general and civil society in particular. Ethics, however, deals with the moral quality of human volition and action, which is to say, with their being in keeping with the moral norm or order which directs man towards his temporal and ultimate end. Religion, *Pesch* once stated, does not produce grain¹⁶. He would certainly have been the last one to say that praying for a good harvest is unnecessary or superstitious. But grace builds upon nature, it does not destroy, rather perfects it. To neglect the so-called secondary efficient causes, such as, in the case of the grain farmer, plant nutrition, soil management, and the like, expecting short-cut intervention from the First Cause, God, would, as *St. Thomas* has pointed out (*De veritate*, q. 11, a. 1), amount to derogation of the order of the universe, since God in his infinite goodness gave his creatures not only their being but also granted them a certain causality of their own. In other words, to distract from the creature's perfection, is to distract from the perfection of the divine power. *Pesch* rejected the notion of "Catholic economics", because it would indeed deny things their natural or proper operation, substituting supernatural for natural causation. His entire 5-volume text (*Lehrbuch*) is testimony of and a lasting memorial to his scholarship and respect for the science of economics as a true science. But he did not equate science with natural science or some sort of "quantumology". He looked upon economics as a social science of a practical and normative nature, not merely descriptive and analytical but also and primarily meant to be of service to decision-makers and decision-takers. The "norm" or principle of "right" economic action with which the economic scientist as well as the economic policy-maker are concerned is national prosperity or the material welfare of a politically united people. But *Pesch* felt that it was not his job or the job of *any* economist as economist to supply blueprints showing what is "the" correct answer or solution here and now or there and then. Because of what *Yves Simon* called "the mystery of contingency", it cannot be foretold with certainty, which concrete measures will or will not work. It is for the "statesman", this term used in the

¹⁶ *Heinrich Pesch*, in: *Die Volkswirtschaftslehre der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen*, edit. by *Felix Meiner*, Leipzig 1924, p. 204.

widest sense to make prudential decisions, consulting facts and probabilities, anticipating future developments and – hope for the best. This, then, is the teleological, aim-oriented and normative character of *Pesch's* economic theory: it inquires into the ways and means of achieving a practical end, namely the efficient allocation of scarce resources for the benefit of a nation. Most likely, *Pesch* did not chose the term *Nationalökonomie* (national or political economy) for the title of his text merely because it was, at least at that time, the most commonly used one in German-speaking countries, but also because he felt that civil society is the normal and most beneficial framework for the organization and operation of an economic system. The fact that today we speak unhesitatingly of the gross national product (GNP), national income, national debt, etc. might be regarded as modern recognition of an old concept, which had and has no nationalistic connotation whatsoever. With the “national economy” in mind, *Pesch* arranged his set of instructional books, his entire *opus*, in a quasi-syllogistic manner.

IV. A THIRD WAY BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

If anything, *Pesch*, whose early concern for the laboring-poor lead him to devote his life to the study of the economic process and its involvement in the maldistribution of income and wealth, has in his very person demonstrated that compassion without competence is likely to be as ineffective as competence without compassion and concern. What today seems to be needed in the approach to the problems of world hunger, inflation, unemployment, etc., is level-headedness and expertise rather than emotionally motivated crash programs. In addition to the certainly needed immediate assistance for the food-deficient nations, there is an obvious need for long-range programs which would enable the nations of the so-called Third World to eventually help themselves. It is by no means a foregone conclusion that stopping any growth of the economies of the North-Atlantic world, their stagnation or even contraction would necessarily be to the long-range advantage of the less developed nations of the world. There will indeed be a need for a change in life style and for a renunciation of the false belief that bigger and faster is the essence of progress. But we must shun ill-conceived programs that our guilty conscience may try to dictate to us. The theology of liberation is now being supplemented by a theology of relinquishment.

But a life-style of relinquishment and abnegation as well as of a responsible conservation of resources do not, of themselves, guarantee a redistribution of income and wealth more favorable to the under or less developed peoples of the world. What a sudden growth-stop may mean is denying even an approximation to affluence exactly to those of our own population near the poverty line. There would be fewer jobs and less hope for advancement. It might even reduce the ability of the countries of the capitalist West to assist those whose pumps must be primed to start the income flow. There would be no surpluses to be shared at home or abroad. There may be a real necessity in the developing countries for some sort of planned economy, at least as a transitional solution. But today's socialism is, as *Barbara Ward*, the very able British economist and genuine defender of the food-deficient nations, points out, is really state capitalism, a mirror image of "old fashioned" capitalism. In its treatment of the powerless, it differs little from that of its capitalist predecessors¹⁷. It offers no long-run solution, none at least that is in keeping with the dignity of man and genuine social justice.

It would be an exaggeration to say that *Pesch* was the *Barbara Ward* of his time. But it is true in the sense that he, too, chose a scientific approach to the solution of socio-economic problems, and did so when the Church tended to offer theoretical generalities as answers to very concrete difficulties. Actually, the Church could not and cannot now really be expected to propose practical solutions. This is not her mission nor is she qualified to do so. It is, rather, the mission of the scholar and expert either to supply hard-headed and workable know-how himself or to furnish the scientific framework and the training which would enable others to inform and guide the decision-makers.

That is what *Pesch* pioneered at a time when Catholics had to rely largely on apologetic pamphlets, sermons and programs to give them direction and hope. It must be remembered that *Pesch* stood practically alone when he ventured to write what might be called his *Summa Oeconomica*. There were, it is true, some books in the field written by Catholics such as *Charles S. Devas' Political Economy* (London 1892), *Luigi Cossa's Die ersten Elemente der Wirtschaftslehre* (Freiburg i. B. 1870/1880), *Julius v. Costa-Rossetti's Allgemeine*

¹⁷ Cf. *Gary MacEoin*, *Forming a Catholic Conscience on Social Questions*. Cross Currents, vol. XXV, No. 2, Summer 1975. *Andrew M. Greeley*, a Chicago-based priest-sociologist, has severely criticized the new no-growth idea as a defense ideology of the guilt-stricken upper middle-class, which would prove to be a "solution", for which not they but the poor will have to pay.

Grundlagen der Nationalökonomie (Freiburg i. B. 1888), *Matteo Liberatore's Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaft* (1888/1891) and *Georg Ratzinger's Die Volkswirtschaft in ihren sittlichen Grundlagen* (1881), but they were mostly texts in the sense of instructional compendiums. What was needed was more than textbook economics, namely a broader orientation based on a more comprehensive treatment of economics.

O. v. Nell-Breuning recently pointed out that when *Pesch* set about his monumental work, the theologians and ecclesiastics of his time knew practically nothing about the prevailing capitalistic economic system¹⁸. Though it greatly affected their care for their flocks, few pastors made an effort to acquaint themselves with the facts. But it must be admitted that such effort would have been largely in vain because of the paucity of informative material and the absence of socio-ethical instructions in the seminaries and in the schools of theology of the universities. Whether one can really say that at the turn of the century Catholics had, for all practical purposes, only unscientific and apologetic pamphlets to oppose the well-developed theoretical literature of the Marxists and the representatives of economic liberalism appears questionable. In addition to a considerable number of serious publications by Catholic authors dealing with labor problems and the social "isms" of the time, there were those economics texts just mentioned that did not lack scholarship and instructional merit. But it seems that the time was not ripe yet to awaken a social consciousness among Catholic leaders. It seems that *W. E. von Ketteler* remained one crying in the wilderness. Until *Rerum novarum* (1891) many seem to have felt that the prevailing economic system was unchangeable and that one had to make the best of it. Others even considered individualistic capitalism as something of a product of the natural moral law and, therefore, not to be opposed. To oppose it, seemed to mean to quite a few, obstruction of law and order and playing into the hands of the enemies of the Church. It was *Pesch* who, in a positive and constructive manner, showed that there was an urgent need for a re-examination of the prevailing hierarchy of values and for a re-ordering of social priorities. Instead of a system in which capital dominates the social order – if "order" it can be called –, there should be an economic order, in which man is restored to his rightful position of control of the economic destinies of society.

¹⁸ Cf. *Christ in der Gegenwart*, 28. Jhrg., No. 13, p. 100.

One might call it Laborism, Operism or a laboristic Economy if these terms did not have connotations of union rule. *Pesch* did favor some sort of co-determination, that is, of limited sharing in the management of a business establishment by its personnel, even using, as he did, the term "*Mitbestimmung*" long before it had become a byword in the German struggle for industrial democracy and for a constitutional work plant (factory or other productive establishment). *O. v. Nell-Breuning* believes that in his "social system of labor (or human industry)", *Pesch* had laid the foundation for a future economic order in which labor will, at long last, assume its due and appropriate role in the decision-making process of the economy. *Pesch, v. Nell-Breuning* says, left to those who would come after him the task of turning the socio-economic postulates of his system into a practical political program. There can be no doubt that we of today have the obligation to advance *Pesch's* ideas from the realm of axiom to that of actuality. Only when that idea has been "institutionalized" in the sense of turning it into a major component of the prevailing culture and of the regulatory system of society, will *Pesch's* mission have been accomplished, his task fulfilled¹⁹.

¹⁹ The writer feels rather unhappy that he did not treat of the many other persons in the United States who at one time or another, directly or indirectly, intentionally or not furthered the cause of Solidarism. It would be almost a sin of omission not to make at least a cursory reference to *Vigil Michel* (1890-1938), monk of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, a foundation of Bavarian Benedictines, who was a true pioneer both of liturgical and social reconstruction. The reader should consult the excellent Ph. D.-dissertation by *Paul Marx, O. S. B.*, professor of sociology at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., *The Life and Work of Virgil Michel*, Washington, D. C. 1957 (esp. pp. 35, 66, 182, 306, 321). German-born Msgr. *Martin B. Hellriegel* (1890), Saint Louis, Mo., father of the liturgical movement in the United States, in 1925 wrote in the July/August issue of the *Centralblatt and Social Justice* an article *Der Schlüssel zur sozialen Frage* (the key to the social question), later re-published as a booklet under the title *The True Basis of Christian Solidarity* (Central Bureau, St. Louis, Mo. 1928). It may be called a socio-theological *apologia* of Solidarism.

As "sympathizers we can only list a few: *Aloysius J. Muench* (1899-1962), former Bishop of Fargo, N. D., at the time of his death Cardinal in the Roman Curia; Germanborn *Jos. Matt* (1877-1966), founder and editor of the newspaper *Der Wanderer*, St. Paul, Minn. (later *The Wanderer*), German-born Msgr. *Charles P. Bruehl* (1876-1963), professor of theology at the famous St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, Pa.; Bishop *Francis J. Hass*, Grand Rapids, Mich. Msgr. *Anthony L. Ostheimer* (1906), Philadelphia, Pa., *Edw. Koch*, Germantown, Ill., former assistant to *F. P. Kenkel*, editor of the now defunct monthly *The Guildsman*; *Fred. Siedenburger, S. J.* (1872-1935), Dean, University of Detroit (Michigan).

Anhang:

Die Veröffentlichungen von Heinrich Pesch SJ.
Zusammengestellt von Richard E. Mulcahy, SJ.*

1. Bücher und Broschüren

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* Quelle: Social Order, St. Louis, Mo., April 1951, S. 186–192.

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