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 (1/4, 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 hitherto 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. Job. 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 fraternities⁴. 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 essay⁵.

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 1848⁶. 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

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from fellow-Catholics in Europe, both in England and on the Conti-
nent. 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 simi-
lar 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 Depression? 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
the 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-Breu-
ning, 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-

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rich Pesch (Henry Holt & Comp., New York 1952, XII, 228p)\textsuperscript{a}. 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\textsuperscript{b}, the Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home\textsuperscript{c}, the Review of Social Economy\textsuperscript{d}, the Historical Bulletin of St. Louis University\textsuperscript{e}, the Jesuit quarterly Thought of Fordham University\textsuperscript{f}, the Social Justice Review\textsuperscript{g}, the Forum\textsuperscript{h}, 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-


\textsuperscript{g} 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.

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 were 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 Lavalle 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 sociology.\[12\]

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

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\[12\] 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 life.

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 preceed 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

18 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.


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

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


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.)


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 order, 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

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18 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 suitableness 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 grain. 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

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 lifestyle 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 predecessors. 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*

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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.

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 fulfilled.

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 und 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.

Anhang:

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

1. Bücher und Broschüren

Ein Wort zum Frieden in der Gewerkschafts-Frage. Trier 1908.
Die Soziale Befähigung der Kirche. 3. Auflage, Berlin 1911.


2. Beiträge zu Sammelwerken

3. Artikel
Lehrlingsvereine und Lehrlingsasyle. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 40 (1891), 313-19.
Der Zusammenbruch der heutigen Gesellschaft. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 42 (1892), 14-25.
Die theoretischen Voraussetzungen der klassischen Nationalökonomie. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 42 (1892), 373-404.
Der Grundirrtum des liberalen Ökonomismus. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 43 (1892), 113-33.
Der Staatssozialismus. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 46 (1894), 1-14, 269-75.
Henry George und die Enzyklika »Rerum Novarum«. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 47 (1894), 365-82, 523-44.
Pflichten und Schranken des Eigentums. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 49 (1895), 16-32.
Freiwirtschaft oder Wirtschaftsordnung? In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 49 (1895), 431-59.
Die Methoden der Volkswirtschaftslehre. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 49 (1895), 449-61.
Die Naturgesetze der kulturellen Entwicklung und die Volkswirtschaft. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 51 (1896), 1-20, 156-74.
Das Coalitionsrecht der Arbeiter. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 54 (1898), 5–17.
Der Katholizismus: die Religion der Weltflucht? In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 56 (1899), 1–14.
Sozialdemokratie und Gewerkschaft. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 58 (1900), 29–41.
Neuere Publikationen über den marxistischen Sozialismus. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 58 (1900), 349–61, 520–35.
Die Pflicht im Wirtschaftsleben. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 60 (1901), 16–30.
Weltwirtschaftliche Tendenzen und volkswirtschaftliche Politik. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 62 (1902), 18–32.
Der Gang der wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Entwicklung. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 64 (1903), 1–16.
Die Wohnungsfrage in ihren Ursachen. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 64 (1903), 524–44.
Kirche und Kapitalismus. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 65 (1903), 114–16.
Reform des Wohnungswesens. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 65 (1903), 251–73.
Die neuzeitliche Entwicklung im Handwerk. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 67 (1904), 486–504.
Segensreiches Wirken des Volksvereins. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 72 (1907), 359–60.
Kultur, Fortschritt, Reform. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 74 (1908), 473–86.
Bevölkerungsprinzip und Bevölkerungsproblem. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 75 (1908), 281–89.
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Christliche Berufsidee und »kapitalistischer Geist«. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 75 (1908), 523–31.
Eine neue Richtung in der Nationalökonomie. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 80 (1911), 51–61, 166–82.
Volkswirtschaftliche Harmonien. In: Stimmen der Zeit, 92 (1917), 654–79.

4. Besprechungen

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Das Buch vom gerechten Richter, von D. Spielberg. In: Stimmen aus Maria Laach, 65 (1903), 579.


5. Zeitungsartikel


