Orthodox Churches, which had valid orders and were acknowledged to be Churches, if schismatic and heretical ones. The Protestant “Churches,” without valid orders, though with valid baptisms, and more deeply in heresy, were not acknowledged to be Churches, so that it must be doubtful at the very least if the decree refers to them.

The work is, however, essentially an anthology of hostile judgments on individual popes like the eighteenth-century Pius VI (“weak, timid and egotistical”). We hear of a succession of papal ailments, from Pius VII (“a serious urinary infection”), Leo XII (“excruciating piles”), Pius VIII (“herpes of the neck”) and Gregory XVI (“a bright red clown’s nose” and a “tumour of the face” caused by excessive snuff-taking), to the “pusillanimous and hypochondriac” Pius XII, who is spared no humiliation, up to the hiccups of which he died. The reader will find here the case against him, but not the case for him. A more disinterested reading of the documents of the Second Vatican Council would stress their mediating character in reaffirming traditional positions while balancing these with new ones. This is why the great majority of more conservative Catholics accepted the Council (even Archbishop Lefèbvre signed all but two of its documents), the problem lying in some of its liberal interpreters. The assertion here that Opus Dei, for example, rejected the council (it is listed with a number of organisations which did) is simply libellous. Critics of Rome like Hans Küng are cited as Gospel. The authors’ conclusion is that under John Paul II, “the Vatican itself remains immured in a ghetto of its own making.” For an armoury of historical arguments against the modern Roman Catholic Church and Rome especially, stated with a baldness lacking in qualification or nuance, the reader need look no further.

Sheridan Gilley
Durham, U.K.

Lehrbuch der Nationalökonomie by Heinrich Pesch, SJ was published in five volumes by Herder in Freiburg between 1905 and 1923. The first three volumes appeared in revised editions before the last two volumes were published. The recent English translation by Rupert Ederer is in ten volumes (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002). Pesch also published in two volumes his Liberalismus, Socialismus und Christliche Gesellschaftsordnung, 1899-1901, recently published as Liberalism, Socialism and Christian Social Order also by Edwin Mellen Press. Pesch’s shorter Ethik und Volkswirtschaft has just been reissued as Ethics and the National Economy by IHS Press in Norfolk, Virginia. All these are in translations by Rupert Ederer.

The 1920s and 1930s were good times to be alive for Catholics interested in the social apostolate, that is, in the role of the faith in reshaping not only individual lives but societies, cultures, political systems, the whole of our common life, after the pattern of Jesus Christ. During most of those decades Achille Ratti reigned as Pope Pius XI, a pope whose efforts to promote social
Catholicism included the establishment of the Feast of Christ the King in 1925 and the encyclical Quadragesimo Anno in 1931, an encyclical whose stated aim was nothing less than "reconstructing the social order and perfecting it conformably to the precepts of the Gospel." Much of Quadragesimo Anno deals with the economic order, and the encyclical's criticisms of the free market and of the existing capitalist system were nearly as trenchant as those made by socialists.

Catholic interest in social questions had already been fostered by Leo XIII's encyclical of 1891, Rerum Novarum, and thus throughout Europe, and indeed beyond Europe, the social apostolate thrived under the guidance of Pius XI. Many individual Catholics were intensely interested in finding an alternative to both capitalism and socialism and in bettering the lot of the poor and of the workers. Among these were two men, G.K. Chesterton and Heinrich Pesch, S.J., different in many ways but sharing a fundamental approach to social and economic questions that make a comparison of these two writers useful. Heinrich Pesch, born in 1854, was Chesterton's senior by twenty years. At his death in 1926, Chesterton still had ten years to live. Though there is no reason to suppose that Chesterton had ever heard of Heinrich Pesch, and though Chesterton often enough poke fun at Germans who wrote ponderous books, I doubt that Chesterton would have done so with Pesch, even though the German Jesuit's magnum opus runs to well over four thousand pages in five volumes, nor was this the only lengthy work that he wrote.

Aside from a multiplicity of articles, Chesterton's social thought is chiefly contained in three books: What's Wrong With the World (1910), Utopia of Usurers and Other Essays (1917), both written before he became a Catholic, and The Outline of Sanity (1926), none of them overwhelming in pages, but all rich in contents. In contrast to Pesch's tomes, Chesterton's can seem like occasional writings, tossed off to satisfy some immediate concern or demand. But despite these superficial differences, Chesterton and Pesch were writing for the same reasons and saying much the same thing. They were both writing to defend man, to defend the family, to defend human society against socialism and capitalism. The systems that each offered in place of capitalism, distribution by Chesterton, solidarism by Pesch have different emphases, but more similarities than differences. Let us look a little more closely at some of the ways in which the thought and concerns of Pesch and Chesterton overlap.

At the outset of his summa economica (as it is sometimes called) Fr. Pesch stated that "man must always and everywhere be the subject and end of the economy." That brings to mind the wonderful and lyrical passage at the end of What's Wrong With the World, where Chesterton says the same thing, but in so different a way. Commenting on the proposals of some officious "doctors and other persons permitted by modern law to dictate to their shabbier fellow-citizens" that "all little girls whose parents were poor" must cut their hair short because long hair might harbour lice. Chesterton, with almost a shout, replies: "Now the whole parable and purpose of these last pages, and indeed of all these pages, is this: to assert that we must instantly begin all over again, and begin at the other end. I begin with a little girl's hair. That I know is a good thing at any rate. Whatever else is evil, the pride of a good mother in the beauty of her daughter is good. It is one of these adamantine tendernesses which are the touchstones of every age and race. If other things are against it, other things must go down. If landlords and laws and sciences are against it, landlords and laws and sciences must go down. With the red hair of one she-urchin in the gutter I will set fire to all modern civilization. Because a girl should have long hair, she should have clean hair; because she should have clean hair, she should not have an unclean home; because she should not have an unclean home, she should have a free and leisureed mother; because she should have a free mother, she should not have a usurious landlord; because there should not be an usurious landlord, there should be a redistribution of property, because there should be a redistribution of property, there shall be a revolution. That little urchin with the gold-red hair, whom I have just watched toddling past my house, she shall not be lopped and lamed and altered; her hair shall not be cut short like a convict's; no, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be hacked about and mutilated to suit her. She is the human and sacred image; all around her the social fabric shall sway and slip and fall; the pillars of society shall be shaken, and the roofs of ages come rushing down; and not one hair of her head shall be harmed."

Although Pesch seldom became lyrical, he shared the same passion that animated Chesterton in this passage. Pesch spent the years 1885 to 1888 near Liverpool in England because Bismarck's Kulturkampf had driven the Jesuits out of Germany. It was this experience of the exploitation and degradation of the English working class by industrial capitalism that made him resolve to devote his life as a priest to the apostolate of social justice. Although he was not able to take up the formal study of economics until he was nearly fifty, at the University of Berlin, he more than made up for lost time. After that, sent to Luxembourg until 1910 to write, Pesch began the Lehrbuch which he did not complete until 1923. The task wore him out, and his superiors sent him to Holland to recuperate, where he died three years later. And although the thousands of pages of this work read like a German academic tome, with extensive review of other authors, careful definitions and close argument, through
it all runs the same zeal for the little red-headed girl in the slums that captured Chesterton’s heart.

If Chesterton and Pesch were saying much the same thing, what was it that each was saying? What is their distinct ratio, the thing that marks out their approach to economics? I think one can say that for neither of them was economics something self-contained, for each always kept the little red-haired girl in view, and not only the little girl, but her mother and also her father, because of whose work the mother could be “free and leisureed.” Chesterton always kept before himself the human being, the human family, their ordinary, normal needs, desires, virtues and faults. Socialism and capitalism were both impositions on the small man. As he wrote in *What’s Wrong With the World*: “I dislike the big Whiteley shop, and...I dislike Socialism because it will (according to Socialists) be so like that shop. It is its fulfilment, not its reversal. I do not object to Socialism because it will revolutionize our commerce, but because it will leave it so horribly the same.”

Pesch, of course, sees the same parallels between socialism and capitalism, saying, in his more academic manner of expression, that socialism “has not without some justification been designated as the rightful heir of the individualistic idea.”

If both these thinkers objected to capitalism, what did they propose in its place? Chesterton proposed distributism, the system of small, well-divided property. Distributism achieves its most precise form in the writings of Chesterton’s friend Hilaire Belloc, for example in *The Restoration of Property*. Chesterton himself was less precise both as to ends and means for establishing a distributist economy and society. In *The Outline of Sanity* he replies to those critics “who will...say that I generalize because there is no practical plan.” And he proceeds: “The truth is that I generalize because there are so many practical plans. I myself know four or five schemes that have been drawn up, more or less drastically, for the diffusion of capital. The most cautious, from a capitalist standpoint, is the gradual extension of profit-sharing. A more stringently democratic form of the same thing is the management of every business (if it cannot be a small business) by a guild or group clubbing their contributions and dividing their results. Some Distributists dislike the idea of the workman having shares only where he has work; they think he would be more independent if his little capital were invested elsewhere; but they all agree that he ought to have the capital to invest. Others continue to call themselves Distributists because they would give every citizen a dividend out of much larger national systems of production. I deliberately draw out my general principles so as to cover as many as possible of these alternative business schemes.

And as far as a method for achieving a distributist society,
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welfare and the public interest is the preservation of an extended middle- and small-sized type of farming, first of all, with regard to the economics of it, because here agriculture is carried on most intensively. In farm population which can work independently on its own soil and maintain itself by its own work, there will be a love of work, thrift, and morality, along with Christian family life, love of fatherland, and loyalty to God-given authority, and a sense of peace and order in social and political life. Nothing will provide the state with such solidity and the preservation of continuing stability to the degree as when it numbers among its population a large number of settled healthy, farm families. All other classes will be the beneficiaries of having on hand the largest possible number of citizens living on their own land.

And a few pages later he writes what could easily be a distributist motto: “While socialism calls for the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, the motto of solidarism is: increase the number of owners!” This, of course, was exactly what Leo XIII had called for in Rerum Novarum: “The law, therefore, should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners.” Thus both distributism and solidarism worked to fulfill the papal mandate, while capitalism did not care how many people became or remained owners, as long as freedom of competition and the free move-

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Distributism emphasizes the need for well-distributed property to safeguard the family in freedom from both bureaucrat and boss. But neither system denies or even omits the concerns of the other. If either tends ever to downplay them, then solidarists and distributists can help each other to gain a more balanced view and program. The two systems are such that they complement rather than conflict. Both are monuments to Catholic social thought during what was probably its brightest age. Both should be serious subjects of study now and in every subsequent age of the Church and the world.

Thomas Storck
Greenbelt, Maryland

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South Lasilrn Railway Station, London