Jonas Hagedorn

Oswald von Nell-Breuning SJ: Aufbrüche der katholischen Soziallehre in der Weimarer Republik. Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018. Pp. 532. Hb, €69.00.

The social problems spawned by the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, combined with workers' increasing sympathies for Marxist doctrine, jolted the Catholic Church into elucidating its teachings on the social order and the relationship of labor and capital. The encyclicals *Rerum novarum*, promulgated in 1891, and *Quadragesimo anno*, issued forty years later, were foundational documents that addressed this need and further developed the church's views on social justice. While they inspired Catholic intellectuals to expand and act on the principles contained therein, the papal pronouncements were likewise the summation of a long discussion among Catholic thinkers on the respective roles of state, church, and society.

In this fine study of German Jesuit Oswald von Nell-Breuning and the blossoming of Catholic social doctrine in the Weimar Republic, author Jonas Hagedorn has presented a gold mine of information and new insights. Nell-Breuning is remembered nowadays, if at all, for his intellectual contributions to social and economic policy in the 1950s and 1960s, the formative years of the West German state. By contrast, the brief but important period of the Weimar Republic is largely missing in literature on this influential theologian and economist. To close this gap Hagedorn has combed through archival sources and evaluated countless letters and articles by the highly productive Nell-Breuning, many of which appeared in the Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit* in the 1920s and 1930s. Solidarism, corporatism, subsidiarity, co-determination, collective bargaining, help for self-help, and the rights and duties of property were only some of the themes hotly debated within the Catholic community and treated by Nell-Breuning during the years of the Weimar Republic.

Hagedorn's work extends beyond the narrow bounds of intellectual biography and offers readers a well told and documented story of efforts to weave important principles of Catholic teachings into the social legislation and constitutional fabric of inter-war Germany. The author describes the conflicts within intellectual Catholicism between social progressives like Nell-Breuning and reactionary romanticists best personified by Othmar Spahn and Carl Schmitt. His story is related against the backdrop of domestic political events in Germany and the unfolding dramas of authoritarian corporatism in neighboring Italy and Austria.

One of the great merits of Hagedorn's book is its comprehensiveness. The author outlines not only the course of events but also the evolution of the elemental concepts and terms found in the discussions on Catholic social teaching. "Solidarism" was one of the most significant ideas for Oswald von

Nell-Breuning. He and his chief ally, Jesuit Gustav Gundlach, understood the term not primarily as a moral imperative but rather as the empirical recognition of the complex nature of modern industrial society and the interdependence of the factors of production. Both men followed in the footsteps of Christian Solidarity's founder in Germany, Jesuit economist Heinrich Pesch (66). It was Pesch who set the theoretical framework within which second-generation representatives of the Solidarist school like Nell-Breuning and Gundlach developed and applied social and economic conclusions.

As two of Germany's foremost Catholic intellectuals in the inter-war period, Nell-Breuning and Gundlach advocated a third way between *laissez-faire* capitalism and authoritarian socialism. They advocated cooperation rather than confrontation. They were inspired not only by the ideas of Heinrich Pesch but also by the writings of Reverend Joseph Mausbach, university professor of moral theology in Münster and Nell-Breuning's dissertation advisor. Elected to the Reichstag as a member of the Catholic *Zentrum* party, Mausbach had drafted key passages of Germany's constitution in 1919 that proved instrumental in reconciling Catholics with the idea of a republic.

Hagedorn paints a picture of Nell-Breuning as a progressive who was nevertheless fastidious in his loyalty to church hierarchy and proud never to have wavered from the official line (232). His Nell-Breuning is both confident and intellectually honest to the point of sometimes being undiplomatic (38). He is a sophisticated thinker but a convinced member of Germany's inward-looking Catholic milieu. Hagedorn describes Nell-Breuning as a strongly self-reflective thinker who can be regarded as the most important commentator of his own writings (31). The book's assessment of the Jesuit is consistently well reasoned and fair. While clearly sympathetic to his main figure, the author never tries to hide aspects of Nell-Breuning's decisions that we, in retrospect, might criticize. Nell-Breuning was mostly, but not exclusively, a theoretician. Hagedorn reveals that he also played an active role in measures to develop self-help structures in areas such as building societies and housing policy.

Decades after *Quadragesimo anno* was published Nell-Breuning was unveiled as its ghostwriter. Hagedorn's work recounts the events leading up to the document's drafting and promulgation. In characteristic modesty, Nell-Breuning later claimed that he had merely put to paper ideas he had culled from the writings of Gundlach and from discussions among members of the *Königswinterer Kreis*, a group of economists and political scientists whose goal was to organize government and society around Christian and social principles.

Students of the Weimar Republic period will, perhaps, be surprised by the entry into Hagedorn's narrative of figures such as Rudolf Hilferding, Werner Sombart, Max Scheler, and Eugen Kogon. Readers will recognize Gustav

Gundlach from his collaboration with American Jesuit John LaFarge on the drafting of *Humani generis unitas*, the encyclical on racism that was never published. Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli and Cologne Mayor Konrad Adenauer make brief but decisive appearances as opponents of backward-oriented calls for a return to the days of guilds and monarchy that were frequently heard in southern German and Austrian circles and ultimately helped inure Catholics to the temptations of National Socialism. And Hagedorn cites the role played by the ubiquitous Jesuit Superior General Włodzimierz Ledóchowski in connection with Nell-Breuning's work on *Quadragesimo anno*.

As any product of good scholarship, Hagedorn's book also provokes questions. American readers will wonder if there was any interaction between Jesuits in the United States and their fellow intellectuals in Germany. We know from the memoirs of John LaFarge, S.J. that he visited the circle around the journal *Stimmen der Zeit* in the late 1930s and regarded its contributors as friends. Catholic leaders in the United States had already begun writing and organizing early in the century along the lines of the two social encyclicals. The works of Monsignor John A. Ryan covered the church-labor relationship, the question of just wages, and social reconstruction. And Jesuits Richard M. McKeon and Dennis J. Comey established and led schools of industrial relations where workers and managers could learn the foundations of economic ethics. A comparative treatment of Germany's Solidarists and prominent social activists in the American Catholic community of the time would surely be enlightening.

This is an important book. Its treatment of the intersection of economics, theology, and social policy during the Weimar Republic will benefit all students of that troubled period in German history. Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh has done an excellent job of copy-editing and the respective indices of persons and topics are both reliable and extremely helpful.

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Joshua J. McElwee and Cindy Wooden, eds.,

A Pope Francis Lexicon. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018. Pp. xiii + 204. Hb, \$24.95.

This volume contains fifty-two brief essays, each on a word or phrase associated with Pope Francis or a topic addressed frequently by him. As one would