

THE HISTORY OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES*

■ HERBERT SCHAMBECK

To be the church in the world of today, the Second Vatican Council has proclaimed with the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* as an objective.

This joy and hope moved me as well when the Congregation for Catholic Education published the *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests* in 1988. They clearly illustrated the order and the continuity of Catholic social doctrine in general and of the papal doctrinal statements in particular. These guidelines were also in a welcome way responsive to the pedagogical concerns of Catholic social doctrine. At this occasion in 1988, the idea came to me that it would be important for the Holy See if, besides the already existing scientific Pontifical Academies, such as the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, there would also be one for social sciences, because Catholic social doctrine is current as a social design recommendation for all parts of the world and important for the social sciences.

The timeliness of Catholic social doctrine increased after the promulgation of these guidelines still further as, after 1988, a political tum emerged in Central and Eastern Europe with the end of Communism, which created an ideological and worldview vacuum which needed, and still needs, to be addressed.

Since I knew that Fr. Johannes Schasching SJ, a long-time professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University, professor emeritus who died in Vienna at an advanced age in 2013, and whom I had already known and respected for his work in Austria for many years, had both an insight into the academic life of the Holy See as well as into the political needs of the world, I arranged a meeting with him during his holidays in Carinthia in August 1989. On this occasion, I conveyed to Fr. Schasching SJ my idea regarding the initiative for the establishment of a Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. He also affirmed the timeliness of such an establishment, saying that it would require a Vatican initiative and, for the realization, a Committee of Proponents possibly with international figures would be needed. After the holidays, in

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Vienna I spoke about this idea with the Viennese full professor of Catholic social doctrine, Univ. Prof. Prelate Rudolf Weiler, who also welcomed the initiative and recommended for me the Dominican scholar Prof. Fr. Arthur Fridolin Utz OP of the University of Fribourg for the Committee of Proponents. Through the literature, he had been known to me for a long time. He had published a lot on Catholic social doctrine, especially with Friar Fr. Joseph-Fulko Groner OP in three volumes under the title *The Social Sum of Pope Pius XII*.

Unfortunately, in the autumn of 1989, my wife Elisabeth was so gravely ill that she died on the celebration day of her patron saint, in November 1969. Before that, she had completed with me on the hospital bed that was to become her deathbed, the necessary preparatory work for my publication of another anthology via the Berlin publishing house Duncker & Humblot. A selection of speeches and sermons of the Cardinal Secretary of State Agostino Casaroli, translated into German. This book, entitled *Faith and Responsibility*, was to have been presented on the 75th birthday of His Eminence Casaroli in Rome on 24 November 1989.

As a result of the illness and loss of my wife, the book presentation was postponed until the end of the second week in January 1990 and was carried out in the Vatican for the Holy Father Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Casaroli.

On the occasion of the book presentation, I gave a reception in the Hotel Columbus on 12 January 1990 in honour of Cardinal Casaroli in the presence of notable figures of the Holy See in Rome, at which I submitted to Cardinal Casaroli a memorandum with the proposal of establishing such an Academy.

In the interim, after prior arrangement by phone, I also had a first meeting on 2 January 1990 with Professor Fr. Utz OP in Fribourg, informing him of my idea of founding a Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and asking if he would like to participate in the initiative. He expressed interest in the affirmative.

In contrast to Fathers Schasching SJ and Utz OP, I am not a theologian and did not have a Chair for Social Ethics or for Catholic Social Doctrine, but rather for Public Law, namely in constitutional and administrative law, political science and legal philosophy. Considering my subjects in the legal faculties, first at the University of Vienna and later in Innsbruck and Linz, I also dealt with the legal philosophy and constitutional content of the papal doctrinal statements; from 1969, for many years I was a member of the Delegation of the Holy See to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and invited by the Pontifical Secretariat of State to comment on papal doctrinal statements. In this way, I came to know Monsignor Roland

Minnerath in the Vatican; at the time, he was an employee of Cardinal Casaroli. He later became a full professor at the University of Strasbourg and is now Archbishop of Dijon. Msgr. Minnerath, Fr. Utz OP and I met subsequently for the first time in Zürich. These meetings we continued later in Vienna. The Apostolic Nuncio to Austria, Archbishop Donato Squicciarini, supported the initiative to found a Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in every way from the outset; he invited Fr. Utz OP and Msgr. Minnerath to a meeting with me about this Academy initiative. Later, Nuncio Squicciarini led the way for the establishment of the Academy as, together with Fr. Schasching SJ, he prepared a draft of the statutes of a possible Academy of Social Sciences.

During this meeting, in preparation for the foundation of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, arose also the question of covering the costs. For this purpose, the establishment of a foundation to promote this Academy was planned. I took the liberty of naming Liechtenstein lawyer Prof. Herbert Batliner, patron of the sciences and avowed Catholic, as a desired sponsor.

Prof. Batliner has supported the Academy from the beginning in every way possible to him, especially with annual allocations and, it should be emphasized, by the constantly covering the cost of the simultaneous translation provided at our meetings, as the Chancellor of our Academy, Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, noted in the Festschrift with gratitude to Prof. Batliner. This support contributes “substantially to our learning about and understanding each other better”.

In turn, Fr. Utz OP had called for this foundation from the circle of Catholic German entrepreneur Mr. Cornelius Fetsch and Mr. Alfonso Horten and I had suggested, on behalf of the Association of Christian Trade Unions of Austria, the former President of the Federal Council, Martin Strimitzer. The Holy See was represented in this foundation by His Excellency Squicciarini. In the many years Prof Batliner was President, and after him, the former President of the Deutsche Bundesbank, Prof. Hans Tietmeyer followed; Squicciarini was succeeded by the Bishop of Graz-Seckau, Egon Kapellari, who is also vice chairman of the Austrian Bishops’ Conference and a member of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE).

In this time of preparation for the Academy’s foundation there was an invitation to a private meeting in the library of the Pontifical Secretariat of State, with Msgr. Minnerath and Fr. Utz OP; I also attended as a representative of the Curia. On this occasion, the representative of the Pontifical Commission *Justitia et Pax*, Msgr. Diarmuid Martin, the current Archbishop of Dublin, and the representative of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Fr. Hervé

Carrier SJ, expressed concerns about the founding of such an Academy. However, later in the founding, when it came to the first Plenary Session of the Academy, Fr. Carrier SJ held a lecture and Msgr. Martin participated in cooperating with the PASS.

The Chair of the preparatory meeting in the Secretariat of State, the then-Assessor Msgr. Crescenzo Sepe, today Cardinal Archbishop of Naples, confided in a personal conversation at this meeting that Pope John Paul II was determined to establish this Academy. I came to realize that intention as, at this meeting, the then-Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Msgr. Eng. Renato Dardozi, suggested that the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences should have its seat at the existing Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Casina Pio IV.

In 1994 came the founding of the Academy by Pope John Paul II, who received the newly appointed members in an audience on 25 November 1994.

Since the opinion forming in the Curia claimed some time after my first initiative, the proclamation and constitutionalization of the Academy did not come on the 100th anniversary of the social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII in 1991 as I had proposed, but only three years later in 1994.

The period of preparation was used for the appointment of Members of the Academy, selected by the Holy See to represent a global spectrum. In addition to theologians, which, to my delight, included Msgr. Minnerath and Fathers Schaching SJ and Utz OP, there were also appointed as Academy Members well-known figures in theology, Catholic social doctrine, ethics, sociology, humanities, law, social sciences, political science and economics.

I, personally, had no part in the selection of the Members of the Academy and in the drafting of its statutes. However, in the form of letters to Pope John Paul II on 28 February 1990, Cardinal Secretary of State Casaroli on 9 March 1990, and the then-Substitute and today's Cardinal Giovanni Re, I indicated the importance of the possible establishment of a Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. It should not go unmentioned that, after the founding of the Academy, Cardinal Casaroli told me that a wish of Pope Paul VI had been fulfilled as the Pope had already suggested such an Academy to his Cardinal Secretary of State, Jean Villot. However, the financial requirements had been too difficult.

After the proclamation of the statutes and the appointment of the Members of the new Pontifical Academy, I agreed, as a personal symbolic contribution to the founding of the Academy, to assume the costs of the membership insignia chains for all founding members, who numbered 30 people at that time.

With this Academy, every year it has been possible to deal with subjects and across continents through handling current and fundamental questions

and concerns of social life in plenary sessions and workshops, as well as to inform the public in press conferences after these meetings and through its own series of publications.

Through the work of the PASS, the concerns of the first encyclical by Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) would be taken into consideration, as well as the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998) by Pope John Paul II. There have already been many papal doctrinal statements and sign-postings such as the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) by Pope Leo XIII, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) by Pope Pius XI, and regarding Pope Pius XII, Fathers Utz OP and Gröner OP published *Social Sum of Pope Pius XII (Soziale Summe Papst Pius XII)* with his Christmas radio broadcasting message from 1944; furthermore, there were the encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) by Pope John XXIII, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) by Pope Paul VI as well as Pope John Paul II and his encyclicals *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimo Annus* (1991).

Fr. Schasching SJ released these social circulars of the popes and other church documents in an anthology with a shared introduction by Fr. Oswald von Nell-Breuning SJ which was published in 1992.

On the occasion of the Academy's meetings, almost regularly, as long as it was possible regarding his health, Pope John Paul II gave an audience to the participants; in 2005 Pope Benedict XVI even came to the PASS.

Even before the start of his Pontificate in 2005, I had the ongoing opportunity to provide private reports about the activity of the PASS to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, as the former Nuncio in Austria, and later to Cardinal Opilio Rossi, as well as to Cardinal Alfonso Stickler, an Austrian-born librarian and archivist of the Holy See whom I had known for a long time and who, in the Curia, supported concerns of the founding of the Academy. Unfortunately, Cardinal Ratzinger was never invited to give a lecture at the PASS before he was elected as the successor of Saint Peter! In his Pontificate the encyclicals *Deus Caritas Est* (2006) and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) provide directives which are also of importance for the PASS.

These papal doctrinal statements were continued in an encyclical started by Pope Benedict XVI and completed by Pope Francis as well as proclaimed in the 2013 encyclical *Lumen Fidei* and published also in his *Evangelii Gaudium* letter in 2013.

This teaching of the church with the social recommendations of papal doctrinal statements stand in relation to the earthly realities, as the aforementioned Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council indicates. In the view of this Constitution, there shall be neither a profanation and secularization of

the church nor a clericalization of the world. The Council has recognized the autonomy of earthly matters. Art. 36 of the Council's Constitution emphasizes and explains, "the proper autonomy of earthly realities"; I quote: "For by the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order. Man must respect these as he isolates them by the appropriate methods of the individual sciences or arts. Therefore, if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith, for earthly matters and the concerns of faith derive from the same God".

This Council's Constitution recognized the plurality in thinking and found: "Often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter". To do this, the Second Vatican Council emphasizes, it "is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed in the aforementioned situations to appropriate the Church's authority for his opinion. They should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserving mutual charity and caring above all for the common good".

With regard to this basic attitude, the PASS 1994 *Sentire Cum Ecclesia* began with the knowledge of representatives of different areas of the social sciences from different parts of the world joined together in a bond of *scientia* and *conscientia*. The specializations in their mutual relationship were also reflected in the 1994–2004 presidency of the PASS of economist Prof. Edmund Camille Malinvaud of France, and from 2004 to 2014, by lawyer Prof. Mary Ann Glendon from the United States, as they will be in the next few years with sociologist Prof. Margaret Scotford Archer from Great Britain. Under these presidencies and accompanied by its own Council, the PASS programme was prepared and, thanks to academic cooperation, implemented in such a way that it could afterwards be recorded in the publications of the PASS.

The Chancellors of the PASS have been particularly important for these tasks and activities; at its inception there was Msgr. Eng. Renato Dardozi, who had been the Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and who prepared the inclusion of the PASS in the Casina Pio IV. Msgr. Dardozi was followed by Jesuit Father Joseph Pittau SJ, later Archbishop of the Curia, whom I had met during my first stay in Japan in 1979 as Rector of Sophia University in Tokyo, and afterwards and until now Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo. Born in Sardinia, the political scientist Joseph Pittau was followed by the Buenos Aires-born philosopher Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, who was already the Dean of the Pontifical Lateran University.

In the last two decades these statutory and organizational conditions have enabled the referral to the PASS of the basic questions and main problems of the social sciences on the basis of human equality and social inequality, the culture of work, the living conditions of the unemployed and help for them, generational problems, fundamental rights of democracy and constitutional law, migration and integration, as well as basic questions of Catholic social doctrine, such as subsidiarity, the common good and the development of the Catholic social doctrine from *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII to *Caritas in Veritate* by Pope Benedict XVI and now with the four-handed encyclical *Lumen Fidei* to *Evangelii Gaudium* by Pope Francis.

In this circular letter, Pope Francis says: “Jesus... wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others” (270). In this responsibility, it is important to use the social sciences in terms of the interests and concerns of the people. Pope Francis advocates here for “dialogue between faith, reason and science” (No. 242 if.) and points out: “Faith is not fearful of reason; on the contrary, it seeks and trusts reason because ‘the light of reason and of faith both come from God’ (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 1, VII; cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (September 14 1998), 43: AAS91 (1999), 39) and therefore cannot contradict each other” (No. 242).

This connectedness of *Fides et Ratio* has accompanied the PASS within the past 20 years. It requires that people’s dignity be recognized and protected by law, which might come from the people and not to the people. Therefore, it is necessary to comply with the attunement of cultural progress, economic growth and social security, in which one can distribute only what was achieved before; in this regard, a social partnership of employer and employee is both necessary as well as, to quote Fr. Schasching SJ in his last letter to me dated February 11 1999, “the need for ecumenism of values-creating forces: the Christian religions, Judaism, the great world religions and all people of good will to impart these value bases and thus to protect a democracy before deformation”. This endeavour will continue to accompany our PASS.

Since I have worked not only in my areas of law, but also for several decades in politics as a Parliamentarian, including 22 years in presidential functions, I would finally like to emphasize that, along with the elaboration of scientific knowledge, its communication in a comprehensible way is important; it not only depends on what someone means but also on how the other one understands and receives!

In this mutual understanding, the responsibility of academics to respond is both possible and necessary. As a lawyer, I believe that this requires connectedness between legality and humanity and this order might also be

fulfilled in mercy, the necessity of which Pope Francis particularly indicated. Regarding the protection of basic rights, this requires above all the protection of life, beginning with the protection of unborn life and until the end of life. As the former Archbishop of Vienna Franz Cardinal Konig said, one should not die by the hand of humans but rather die accompanied by the helping hand of other humans.

With our Academy of Social Sciences, may we contribute to this compassionate responsibility: in word, in scripture and in fact, as well as deepened by worship for which we have the opportunity in our Masses in or near St. Peter's. This according to the abovementioned Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* with joy and with hope: *ad multos annos* for our *Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze Sociali*.