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Catholic Progressives in England after Vatican II. By Jay P. Corrin. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2013. Pp. x + 523. \$49.

Corrin's book traces the growth and influence of a movement of progressive Catholics in England in the 1960s. Associated mostly with the journal *Slant* and led and inspired by two Dominican priests, Laurence Bright and Herbert McCabe, and a young Terry Eagleton, this group of Marx-inspired Catholics sought simultaneously to bring about substantive structural reform in the English Catholic Church and in British society as a whole. Largely theorists rather than radical activists, they argued consistently against English classism and Catholic hierarchicalism and, it has to be said, by the end of the six or so years during which *Slant* was published (1964–1970, with little more than 2000 subscribers), had nothing much to show for their efforts.

With such a picture of short-term existence and relatively little effect, C. has to make a good case for a 500-page book about the exploits of these Catholic revolutionaries, for such they were. I am not sure that he succeeds. The first of the three parts of the book offers some generalizations about the English Catholic Church, presenting it as both conventional and rigidly classist, but it also includes what may well be the most interesting chapter of all, a discussion of the influence of Chesterton, Belloc, and other Distributists. Unfortunately, C. concludes, the *Slant* group largely missed the opportunity to learn from this earlier generation of thinkers. Part II (ca. 100 pages) spends an unnecessarily long time rehearsing the story of Vatican II, a tale that has already been told too many times, particularly as *Slant* once again paid only minimal attention to the council, and then mostly critically. Part III, the topic of the book, is reached on page 173 and takes up the remaining 150 pages.

An account of the *Slant* group is a challenge to a storyteller, however gifted. For the most part the members wrote, and the historian can do little but summarize some of their writings and explain some of the external crises and internal squabbles that would affect any such radical group. As C. admits in his final and excellent summative chapter, *Slant* was destined to fail for several reasons. Their members were intensely theoretical, suspected of Marxism (probably rightly), uninterested in associating with the working classes without whose support they could not succeed, and laughably out of touch with the English culture of the times. How indeed do you promote a revolutionary movement in politics or church at a time associated with Prime Minister Harold MacMillan's famous slogan, "You've never had it so good!"? In the Golden Age of the Welfare State, when good health care and better educational opportunities were there for the taking, entirely free, what working man or woman wants to exchange all this for a political platform? There were strikes aplenty in these years, of course, but they were about pay and working conditions, not revolution.

There is much to like about this book, particularly the discussion of the Chester Belloc tradition, the final chapter analyzing the failure of the movement, and—above

all—the almost 100 pages of notes including many gems and showing enormous erudition. But I also have a few quibbles. Is it really appropriate in discussing the influences on Vatican II to give two paragraphs to Congar, Chenu, de Lubac, and Schillebeeckx, but six pages to Teilhard de Chardin? Could not C. distinguish between the negative and ahistorical Thomism of the establishment and the flexible and historically sophisticated use of Thomas by such as Chenu and Congar? And if you are going to dismiss the English hierarchy as a bunch of upper-class patriarchs, would it not make sense to attend to more than just Cardinal Heenan? Long lists of names are of little value to the reader unless they are identified, and often this does not happen (e.g., p. 224). And surely it is a mistake to suggest that liberation theology owes something to the *Slant* group. The reason the Latin American movement succeeded where *Slant* did not is precisely that it began as a grassroots movement, and the theorizing, as Gustavo Gutiérrez has said, was “the second act.”

In the final pages of the book the author makes some interesting comparisons between *Slant*, Radical Orthodoxy, and the thought of Stanley Hauerwas. Curiously, C. does not make the point that all three approaches to modern Catholicism are less effective than they might be because none of them has a concrete ecclesial structure in which its ideas are worked out. It is all so theoretical. If you are not going to be orthodox, then you had better have a vigorous commitment to orthopraxis. *Slant* failed not so much because its ideas were bad, but because it had no solid ground under its feet in the English church of the time. If its intellectually snobbish leaders had been interested in establishing base Christian communities under the leadership of the common people, who knows what might have happened?

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Christ in the Life and Teaching of Gregory of Nazianzus. By Andrew Hofer, O.P.
Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. x + 270. \$99.

This book, we are told, is the first one dedicated to an overview of the Christology of Gregory Nazianzen. Since “theologians as diverse as Cyril and Nestorius, Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, Maximus the Confessor and Monothelites all claimed Gregory’s authority for their own doctrinal ends” (227), Hofer is more than doubtful about the adequacy of the *Dogmengeschichte* approach for the different Christologies before Chalcedon, and especially for Gregory’s very distinctive account of Christ.

Instead, H. enters into what Gregory holds most dear, namely, the *Logos* in his life, by studying the subtle weave of Gregory’s attitude to *logoi*, examining how Gregory blends all the senses of *logos* so that they converge on salvation by the *Logos*. The first of six chapters lays the groundwork in Gregory’s life as a rhetor, a master of words and persuasion, and their bearing on his theology of the *Logos*, “the Word of God who comes to guide him and his audience to the light of the Trinity” (9). Especially