

For the New Reader

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Restatement of core Catholic Worker beliefs, distinguishing them from Fascism, Communism, and capitalism. Emphasizes voluntary, private, and personal action to improve the social order. (DDLW #310).

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is strongly anti-Fascist because Fascism denies that man has a higher obligation than his obligation to the State, because Fascism believes that man is made for the State and denies that the State is made for man, because, although it believes and acts on these principles, as is apparent in Italy and Germany, it *pretends* to recognize religious, political, and economic rights, and is therefore more dangerous in many ways than the open enmity of Communism.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is insistent anti-Communist, in spite of all you may have heard to the contrary, because Communism claims that “man lives by bread alone”; deifies comfort; denies religious, political, and economic freedom, though not as frankly as it did once; has replaced the capitalist and aristocrat with the Communist Party, but still enslaves and exploits the peasant and the proletariat; is, in short, no better than State Capitalism.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is for Christian communism, as practiced in Catholic monasteries and by the early Christians, as an economy of perfection, possible only on a *voluntary* basis.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is anti-capitalist, in the sense that it condemns the spirit of greed, of rampant materialism, that has become synonymous with that system and has led to the present abuses in production and distribution.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is not opposed to private property, but on the contrary works for “the restoration of property” through co-operatives, credit unions, and the back-to-the-land movement. It supports private ownership of the means of production, except where such ownership is incompatible with the common good, as in certain public utilities, but opposes the concentration of productive power in the hands of a few, because that concentration has almost always been destructive of the common good.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER is not opposed to “saving for a rainy day” and for the support of one’s dependents, but is more interested in giving, not only because it is the duty of Christians to give their surplus to the poor, but also because it is good economics to distribute idle money among those who will spend it.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER does not condemn any and all war, but believes the conditions necessary for a “just war” will not be fulfilled today.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER admits the importance of political action, but is much more interested in the importance of *private* action, in the creation of order out of chaos.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER admits the importance of public responsibility for the poor and needy, but is much more interested in the importance of *personal* responsibility for the hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, sick, criminal, afflicted, and ignorant.