

Who Then is My Brother?

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Summary: Defines Christian personalism as “the realization of the dignity of the other fellow, of our obligation to him, the willingness to work with him, on those elements of truth he has seized hold of, accepting his cooperation as far as he will give it, and the refusal to admit disappointment when he doesn’t go as far as we think he might.” Argues that the Marshall Plan has denied this definition and is an extension of industrial capitalism and abrogates our personal responsibility. (DDLW #156).

THE MARSHALL PLAN

An Editorial

Who Then Is Our Brother?

The opposition of THE CATHOLIC WORKER to the Marshall Plan is based upon

1. Its violation of the Christian concept of charity.
2. The fact that it has for its prime purpose the extension and propagation of an economic system we believe to be unjust and immoral.

Consistently THE CATHOLIC WORKER in its editorial policy, in its signed articles, in its manner of operating Houses of Hospitality has emphasized Christian Personalism (the realization of the dignity of the other fellow, of our obligations to him, the willingness to work with him on those elements of the Truth he has seized hold of, accepting his cooperation as far as he will give it, and the refusal to admit disappointment when he doesn’t go as far as we think he might).

Consistently we have written in terms of personal responsibility and the need for all Catholics to exhaust the message of Christ as given to us in the Sermon on the Mount. “I have a new commandment to give you, that you are to love one another; that your love for one another is to be like the love I have borne you.” *“Like the love I have borne you.”* That is the essence of the Lord’s teaching.

His love for us was not self-righteous but full of deep compassion. His love was based upon fraternal charity for us, the love of a Brother for brothers. Try and imagine Our Lord telling the non-believers among the multitude at the time of the miracle of the loaves and fishes "Go hungry, for I know that you do not agree with me now, and I know (and He did know) that on a certain Friday you will demand my life because my teachings affront your social sensibilities.

This then is the essence of the Marshall Plan. We are seizing upon the starvation status of our brothers in Europe and telling them, "Go hungry, you do not agree with our ideological concepts, if I feed you now you may oppose me later." The direct antithesis of our Lord's teaching and example.

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We have consistently in THE CATHOLIC WORKER discussed the problem of modern industrial capitalism. We have not been deluded, nor have we deluded any of our readers into thinking that with the application of the revolutionary principles of Christ in our lives, and in the lives of any great numbers of people, that the present social and industrial structure can continue to exist. Insofar as we apply these principles in our lives to that extent the Christian revolution has begun, to that extent the present system has been changed.

We do not believe that Europe can be saved from the domination of one servile state, Russia, by the extension of the economic policies of another servile state, the United States.

We do know that this is just what is involved in the Marshall Plan. Our Secretary of State has not tried to conceal it, he has in fact been quite explicit on this score. We do know that already over one-half of the monies sent to Greece are being spent on the army.

To take advantage of a people's destitution has always been a fundamental policy of historical capitalism. Our present system based as it is on the profit motive can never give the underdog an even break. It is that form of capitalism which has brought about the present situation in Europe. It is that form of capitalism which should bear the cost of repairing the damage. If we would begin here and now to produce for use and not for profits we could meet the present crisis with small inconvenience to ourselves.

For the past three years we have been running the names and addresses of needy persons in Europe. We felt that it was an opportunity for our readers to practice personally what we have been writing about all these years. Our readers have answered these appeals for help magnificently. We pray that they may continue to do so. We hope that they will join us in offering our prayers, in increasing our penances, in imploring Our Lord during the reception of the sacraments to smile upon His children throughout the world regardless of race or creed or political belief.

The Spiritual Weapons are our strength, as well as our joy, and upon them we must rely constantly.