

Day After Day - October 1934

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Notes the poor women hired as "walking billboards" whose miserable appearance belies the glamour of the products which they advertise. Compares the physical abuse of Catholic Worker pamphleteers to that suffered by Jesus during His Passion. Observes that such treatment deepens our appreciation of Christ's suffering. Summarizes Father Lord's lecture on the differences between Nationalism and Patriotism. (DDLW #282).

Very damp and drear. Walking across Fourteenth street a steamed looking girl goes in costume advertising the Gypsy tearoom. She wears garish dress and a sandwich sign. She has been on her job all summer. There is another woman with bleached marcelled hair who advertises a beauty parlor, a poor wretch haggard with want and in herself a bitter satire directed against the comfortable women who preen and luxuriate in facials, manicures, unguents and ointments, powders and perfumes, while their poorer sisters tramp the streets, ill fed and weary. Another satire, a middle-aged woman trundling a baby carriage bedecked with signs advertising buggies and high-chairs, bicycles and toys and other joyous things. She walks the street up and down across the town, no joy in her tired eyes and sad enduring mouth.

The Catholic Worker Propaganda Committee, whose patron is Edmund Campion, worked valiantly all month. September first was International Youth Day, and a crowd of young men and women, all college students and some seminarians, spent the afternoon passing out pamphlets in Tompkins Square, where an anti-war Communist meeting was being held.

One of the committee and a friend of the paper since its beginning objects to this procedure of giving out leaflets to the Communists, on the ground that it antagonizes and gives rise to violence.

It is true that that day one of the seminarians was struck several times by irate members of the Young Communist League, who are notoriously the most violent of the Communist group, and others had the leaflets torn from them and destroyed.

But when the Communist party is propagating lies about the Church and war, can we stand by and be silent and dignified? We enter our propaganda as a protest to them, and also to enlighten the thousands of bystanders, who are not Communists, who attend these affairs or who are gathered by the crowds and bands and cheering.

Of course it is undignified to receive a blow in the face. But it is a good thing to be so struck sometimes. It makes it a bit easier to meditate on the Passion of our Lord. One can feel more keenly the blows and jeers He received from the mocking soldiers. Our indifference is jarred a bit with this upsetting of our dignity.

Here are a few things Father Lord said at the recent School of Catholic Action. (I print them for the benefit of those who question our attitude on Nationalism.): “A patriot is one who loves his country; a Nationalist is one who hates every other country. Patriotism is Catholic; Nationalism is non-Catholic and often anti-Catholic. On the one hand there is the division of races and on the other, the division of classes, making for war. But we are members, one of another. The concept of Internationalism towards which the Communists are rightly striving, is part of the concept of the Mystical Body of Christ.”