

War Plans Taken With Awful Calm

By Dorothy Day

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Summary: Reports on the growth of C.W., new houses, the newspaper's circulation, and various projects. Assesses the employment situation and the country's willingness to mobilize for war and the making of profit. Expresses gratitude for the people who have answered their appeal and have continued to make the C.W.'s ministry possible. Amidst talk of war and peace " It would be hard to keep a cheerful spirit in the face of the calm acceptance of this preparation for mass slaughter and insanity if it were not for our faith." (DDLW #350).

One of the functions of this column is to give all the odds and ends of news to our friends throughout the country. It is a letter to those who have written to us and have not yet received answers. Correspondence was delayed this month, by me at least, because I was travelling a good part of the time.

New Houses

During the month we received word of new Houses of Hospitality opening up all over the country, some under the auspices of *The Catholic Worker* and some not. In two cases we hear of priests starting hospices in their parishes (good news for Father Palmer, who believes that there should be such a Works of Mercy center in each parish.) In Philadelphia six young Quakers have started living together in a little lay community and they write that they consider themselves our stepchild. In Ruthland a new house is opening, also in Minneapolis and Canton. As soon as we get the details we will print another revised list.

Circulation

As to the paper, during one month a thousand single subscriptions have come in. The growth of the paper is steady and sure. At the same time we hear from some friends that they receive the paper irregularly. We call attention to the fact that our mailing of the 130,000 papers which go out each month is all done by volunteers around the St. Joseph House of Hospitality. All the addressing is by hand—in consideration of the need of human beings amongst us for work, we don't look to the addressograph to make the work lighter. Man men and women have been brought back to a sense of their own dignity and usefulness, by the work they can do to help us. In the long run, we consider our method of using hands instead of machines, a more profitable and productive way.

But if there have been slip-ups, do let us know. It may be the fault of the postoffice, and it may be ours.

The Stoves Are Going

Winter is now upon us and all day long the doors open and shut (most often they don't shut) as hundreds of visitors come and go. The oil stoves are lit, the grate fires are burning, the coffee pots are steaming on the stoves in the store where the breadline is fed every morning and up in the kitchen where we have fifty lunch and dinner guests. Now again the fires are lit in the street along the curb where the men huddle together in the long line which stretches around the corner. The streets are like canyons and the wind sweeps down past the pushcarts and penetrates. Now more than ever that hot coffee and bread is a welcome meal, and the men go back and stand in line again to come back for "seconds." Easily a thousand breakfasts are served each day, and now for three years the work has gone on and is spreading through the country.

Farms—Peace

If only the farms increased as the Houses of Hospitality are doing, there would be the beginnings of that social order which is the foundation of peace at home.

There is news everywhere of factories opening and employing again thousands of men but often the work offered is to make machines of destruction, not of peace. Men feel they must take the work rather than see their wives and children hungry, but there is a bitterness and a cynicism growing everywhere.

At the same time the unemployment situation remains the same. Out in Pittsburgh one steel mill employs four thousand men which used to employ 24,000. Men cannot work for peace until their work is moral and constructive. They cannot live at peace until they have work to keep body and soul together. More than ever we must stress our farm program.

Traveling

This last month, I have visited the Philadelphia group, the Baltimore group, Il Poverello House in Washington, a *Catholic Worker* cell at Annapolis Naval Academy, and also at Kecoughtan, Virginia. In Virginia Louise Mulherin took me to visit the ship yards at Newport News where 9,000 men are employed and where they say there is enough work to keep the men busy for six years. There is no union there, either A. F. of L. or C.I.O. We saw the Standard Oil Tankers under construction, and the beginnings of the passenger ship, America, the largest to be built in American shipyards. The government had just finished the construction of a big freighter for her merchant marine which was leased by the Grace lines and probably subsidized immediately by the government to such an extent that they are getting it free of charge. The yards are at work on several others to be handled in the same way. I thought of the ten thousand

seamen thrown out of work, and uncared for by the government, which is so careful to protect the shipowners from loss.

Already Standard Oil, reputedly so careful of their employees, have put ten ships under the flag of Panama and fired all their crews, hiring Canadian ones to take their places. The United States Lines is trying to do the same thing, and while the Maritime Commission has passed on the idea, the President has not made up his mind. Secretary Hull says it is a violation of the neutrality we profess, but the shiplines are not worrying about neutrality. All they think of is profits.

Langley Field

On Langley Field barracks have been thrown up these last weeks, preparing for an influx of men. Fort Benning, Georgia, is fitting itself out to take care of twenty thousand. All the preparations are being made for war. God help us.

At Annapolis, I was invited to speak to the Newman Club which is made up of 450 midshipmen. We have still the freedom of speech which permits us to go even into a naval academy to speak of conscription, conscientious objection and the Papal encyclicals on peace. How long we will have such freedom it is hard to see.

Peace and Joy

In the space of two weeks I covered not only the shipyard, Langley Field, Ft. Monroe, and Annapolis; heard much talk in Baltimore of the activities at the Bethlehem Steel mills and the huge airplane factory there; and always much talk of war and peace.

It would be hard to keep a cheerful spirit in the face of the calm acceptance of this preparation for mass slaughter and insanity if it were not for our faith. We must have not only peace but *joy* in the Holy Spirit. Both are its fruits. And this would be absolutely impossible if we were not working, not only for God's kingdom on earth, but towards the life to come.

It is again a question very often of a *will* to joy, just as we have to use our will to love. So we can take joy in the children amongst us, celebrating as we do this month the birth of Eileen, new daughter of Jim and Helen Montague. We can take joy in the farm and in these crisp cold days of sunlight and color. We can take joy too in the cities in that our days are full and occupied with the work we love doing, in the companionship of our fellow workers. We must recognize that peace begins within, and that peace must go together with joy and light.

Thanksgiving

We have joy too because we can thank all our kind friends who helped us out on receiving our October appeal. We started clearing up the bills in all directions and now we are only about fifteen hundred dollars short. This indeed is a very small debt when one considers the vastness of the work. We thank our creditors for their patience in waiting. We thank them if they have prayed, as we have asked them too when they dunned us, that we would be enabled to pay. We thank our friends and readers all over the country who came to the rescue of their paper. For indeed it is a work which belongs to all of us, it is a part of the lay apostolate. As usual priests and nuns responded generously. It is not enough for them to take care of all their own large obligations,—they have helped us too and we are deeply grateful to them all.