

Catholic Worker Celebrates 3rd Birthday; A Restatement of C. W. Aims and Ideals

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, May 1936, 1, 6.

Summary: Restatement of core Catholic Worker ideals regarding private property, class war, interracial relations, atheism, Marxism, fascism, Communism, materialism, and the role of the state. (DDLW #300).

With this the fourth anniversary number of *The Catholic Worker*, it is proper again to state our stand and our opposition to the industrial system, to military preparedness, to interracial injustice.

We are writing as Catholics and as Americans. We do not believe that the two positions are incompatible.

We are accused by false conservatives who do not know what they want to conserve, of being Communists. And we are accused by Communists of being Fascists.

So we restate our position and the positions of both the communist and the fascist-minded opponents.

Private Property

Communists believe in State Socialism as a step to Communism.

We believe in widespread private property, the de-proletarianizing of our American people. We believe in the individual owning the means of production, the land and his tools. We are opposed to the “finance capitalism” so justly criticized and condemned by Karl Marx but we believe there can be a Christian capitalism as there can be a Christian Communism.

Class War

The Communist believes in the necessity of achieving State Socialism by class war. (“How are you going to convert the wicked capitalist, the speculator, the banker?” he says. And *his* answer is “by liquidating them”.)

We believe in using the following means: Indoctrination by using all the propaganda means at our disposal: by the individual practice of the works of mercy: by farming communes which will provide work for the unemployed and leadership for those who are anxious to undertake the job of building up a new social order.

Atheism

The Communist is Atheist. “Atheism is an integral part of Marxism” Lenin says.

We believe that we are all members or potential members of the mystical Body of Christ, and that we must show that faith by translating the spiritual into the material. *All* men are our brothers, Jew or Gentile, white or black, since God created us *all* and since His Son died to atone for the sins of *all* men. Since Christ is our Brother, *all* men are our brothers, the communist, fascist, the red baiter and the “capitalist.”

We oppose the “finance capitalism” of the American industrial system because it is as truly materialistic and hence atheistic as Marxism. And we believe that only Fascism which denies all human liberty can keep it alive.

We are opposed to “social planning” because it will lead to servitude, and because we believe with R. H. Tawney (whose books Peter Maurin has been recommending to our readers since the first issue) that “society is a spiritual organism and not an economic machine.”

Not Red-baiting

We believe that all the hundreds of thousands of workers marching throughout the industrial centers today are justly criticizing the present social order as debasing and degrading.

We believe that they are braver and more honest men and women than those large masses of indifferent and comfortable materialists who close their eyes to the misery and degradation of the American people, or those others, the rabid red-baiters who, in opposing the communist solution, uphold the present materialist system.

Messiahs

We do not believe that sharing the wealth, a reformed monetary system alone, old age pensions and epic plans are practical or fundamental. We do not believe that legislation is going to bring us out of the morass we are floundering in.

We do believe that the problem before us of working for a social order in which the way of life will enable man to save his soul, is a moral one that must engage the minds and energies of all Catholics.

Americans

All Americans indeed should wake to reality, and in recalling what Thomas Jefferson stood for in the minds of his countrymen, look around them and contemplate the state we are in today. This issue of the paper is carrying stories of conditions throughout the world.

Inasmuch as we do not concern ourselves with such conditions, we are responsible for them.

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of them Ye have done it unto Me,” Christ said.