

On Pilgrimage - September 1976

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, September 1976, 2.

Summary: Chronicles a busy summer of visitors and talks. Says the 60's were not a time of fruitful action and calls for a renewal of the personalist and communitarian revolution through land trusts, credit unions, cooperatives, decentralization and redistribution of land—"this is the living peace movement today." (DDLW #572).

It is Saturday, August 28, as I write this, and the summer has been crowded with visitors, both at Maryhouse and at the farm, and there has been traveling, too. No matter how often I agree to speak at meetings, I go with fear and trembling. I enjoy traveling, but to speak is an agony, and to have to talk at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia August 6th was difficult, indeed. However, I am glad we are printing the short talk I gave, to remind our readers of the penance Ammon Hennacy used to do each year, and our own need of penance and of prayer. We are still living in a time of war, and preparations for war.

During my few days in Philadelphia I was happy to be with Mother Teresa of India and Eileen Egan. To meet Dom Helder Camara, the heroic bishop of Recife, Brazil, was an honor indeed.

Retreat

Fr. John J. Hugo gave a small group a week's retreat – a study of the Scriptures – in Pittsburgh, the third week in August. I left there refreshed and strengthened. Cecilia Hugo drove me to Avon, Ohio to visit with Dorothy Gauchat, at Our Lady of the Wayside, where, most unexpectedly, we found Stanley telling stories to the little ones who were delighted, especially with his famous one of the Lion who ate up every member of the family. It took me a long time to realize that this story of his could be interpreted as a humorous attack on our pacifism. We visited with Pat and Kathleen Jordan, associate editors of the **Catholic Worker**, who are working with Dorothy Gauchat now. Since Cecilia Hugo had to return to Pittsburgh, we were glad Dorothy Quinn and Terry could drive the rest of us back to Tivoli.

Then on to New York for a few days, to get this report in, and back to the farm again, to go on for a two-day visit with the Emmanuel community of Albany.

Back on Wednesday to Tivoli to greet the Continental Walkers at the Tivoli Farm.

The Labor Day weekend at Tivoli will see a meeting of the Eastern Catholic Worker houses. We expect most visitors will bring sleeping bags and sleep in dormitories, and even in rows on the extensive lawn between the two main houses at Tivoli. Peter Maurin house will also hold many.

With John Papworth's letter in this issue of the paper, I would like to give a little of his background. I met him a number of times when I was in England attending the Pax Christi meetings. He was the editor of **Resurgence**, a monthly. E. F. Schumacher, who wrote **Small is Beautiful**, published by Harper's a few years ago (and available still, I hope, in paperback, since I hear colleagues are using it as required reading) regularly writes for **Resurgence**.

Papworth was called to Africa to be economic adviser to President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. Zambia is a neighbor to Tanzania, where Julius Nyerere is president. (His ideas remind me of Peter Maurin's.) Papworth wrote a book, which he sent me, but unfortunately that book disappeared from my room at the farm. (Please return it whoever you are!) These men favor a village economy.

Peter Maurin said we should try to build a society where it was easier to be good. And that is what the Catholic Worker is trying to do. And what the peace movement in the U.S. is trying to do.

People ask me, on my travels, (or young visitors to our houses and farms) and speak as though the peace movement is dead. They speak of the 60's as though they were a time of fruitful activity, which they were not. They were a time of anger and turbulence, even. But I like to call attention to Bob and Marge Swann, both of whom spent six months in prison for trespassing on missile bases.

They were the ones to bring Schumacher to America, to speak at Harvard, and at N.Y. City College. They circulate the literature of a "new society, built within the shell of the old," as Peter said. They will send you a list of the literature they have on hand (at 183 West Rd., Ashby, Mass. 01831. Tel. (617) 386-5358), to start you on a constructive road to peace. Land trusts, credit unions, cooperatives, decentralization, a redistribution of land – this is the living peace movement today. "There can be no revolution without a theory of revolution." So on with the study of theory which leads to action. Reading Eric Gill and Chesterton would help, too. This is the Personalist and Communitarian Revolution of Emmanuel Mounier and Nicholas Berdyaev.