

Day by Day - April 1936

Dorothy Day

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Summary: Admires Communist demonstrators, tells of speaking trips, and appreciates the youth in Kansas for their enthusiasm in learning of social issues. (DDLW #299).

It is Saturday afternoon and we are going to press Monday. Outside the sun is shining, the sky is filled with fleecy, winddriven clouds. One of the Champions from St. Louis was here for lunch and his wife said that New York air filled her with energy. On a day such as this, it fills me with lethargy. I should like to be out wandering around the streets, watching the demonstration of Communists in front of the WPA headquarters on Fifteenth Street (5,000 demonstrators, roaring, singing, flaunting their banners, protesting the laying off of 40,000 WPA workers). Mr. Clancy down the street has to support his wife and four children on \$15 a week, which he gets from a WPA job. While the "Reds" demonstrate there is the sound of the booming horns of the Atlantic liners which sail out of the harbor every Saturday, bearing vacationists for the spring holidays. Mr. Clancy never had a holiday except at Coney Island, or fishing perhaps in that sewage laden North River for blue shell crabs to eke out the meager diet of his family.

Travels

There is a long report to make to our readers of the happenings of the last two months, which have been just about as crowded and as eventful as any in the life of the CATHOLIC WORKER.

Since the last issue of the paper representatives of the CW have spoken in Washington, D.C.; Troy, New York; Winooski Park, Vermont; Beloit, Alina, Kansas City, Topeka, Parsons, St. Paul, Fort Scott, Manhattan, Atchison, Leavenworth, St. Mary's and other towns in Kansas; at Fort Smith, Subiaco, Little Rock and Mena, in Arkansas; and in Detroit.

Manual Labor

Some thousands of letters and notes have been written by three of the office workers; visitors have come in daily, there have been continual round table discussions and meetings held several nights a week; housekeeping, cooking, cleaning and up-keep of the House of Hospitality (the editors participate in all these physical activities); the cleaning, plastering and painting

of the new house on Mott street (see story elsewhere in this issue) and finally, the farming commune located after much search.

Jottings

Here are a few notes gleaned from my trip:

“In Kansas City I was changing trains at 8 in the morning and had a two-hour wait. I walked up the hill to St. Mary’s Hospital, where they were very hospitable and invited me to breakfast afterward. . .

In Wichita I stayed with Angela Clendennen and her sister Madeline Aaron who writes very good poetry and is working on “The Mystical Body” series for study clubs. Angela is working on the Catholic Action series, the next one to be the Liturgical Year. They work with Father McNeil, who is head of Sacred Heart Junior College, head of the Parochial Board of Education, head of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; he also has started St. Peter Clavier Mission. (A sample of how a priest fills in his time.)

Pratt, Kansas

A town of ten thousand. We came by bus, straight west into a glorious sunset. Tumbleweeds against the drift fences. Osage orange hedges, as typical of this part of the country as the stone walls of New England. Trees like scalloped lace against the sky, and everywhere that beautiful flatness. Never in all the world do you see such sky, or so much sky, as in Kansas.

The audiences out here are usually half Protestant and they show interest in the work of the paper.

Sodalities

The thing that impressed me most about Kansas was the tremendous enthusiasm of the youth groups in the sodalities, an enthusiasm which brought them over hundreds of miles in sub-zero weather, to conferences where they had intensive discussion of problems such as communism, fascism, the totalitarian state, education, etc. They all had many questions to ask, even the youngest and they were well trained to get up and express themselves.

Varia

We regret any hurt feelings of our readers by the comments in Varia in the last issue.