Catholic Social Justice in Depression Era America: A comparative Study of the Jesuit Labor Schools and the Catholic Worker

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Abstract

(Catholic Worker, Xavier Labor School, Social action)

During the Depression Era in America there were many Catholic social action movements that helped to address the problems of poverty and homelessness; two of them were the Catholic Worker and the Jesuit Labor Schools in New York. Both the Catholic Worker and the Jesuit Labor Schools sought to alleviate these problems and managed to help their communities in different ways according to how they believed they could best serve the problems of the time.

This thesis is a comparative study of the two groups that considers how each used the same Catholic tradition and documents in different ways. By using secondary sources, the thesis analyzes each group’s influences, goals, activities, problems, and relations to Church hierarchy.

Exploring the details of these criteria, the differences between these two groups in both motivation and style of work is made clear. The thesis concludes with a comparison of each group’s success; it shows how and why the Jesuit Labor Schools had more short term success while the Catholic Worker managed to have long term success.
Catholic Social Justice in Depression Era America:
A Comparative Study of the Jesuit Labor Schools and The Catholic Worker

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The 1930s were a turbulent time in American history. The nation was deeply troubled by the Great Depression, an economic crisis which lasted for nearly a decade and led to the economic ruin of millions. A large number of Americans lost their jobs and homes during the Depression. As the government scrambled to respond, numerous groups arose with a desire to assist those most deeply affected by the economic collapse. The Catholic Church was at the forefront of this activity. In 1931, Pope Pius II released the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. The document encouraged many Catholic groups to focus their ministries on economic recovery. Two such groups were the Jesuits, who responded by founding numerous labor schools, and the Catholic Worker, a radical movement founded by Dorothy Day, which focused on the immediate needs of affected people. Both the Jesuits and the Catholic Worker took the new Catholic teachings on social justice to heart and allowed those teachings to guide their ministry. This study will focus on the development of these social teachings and their application to the real-world efforts of the Society of Jesus and the group the Catholic Worker.

These two groups work as good case studies, because they have many similarities and also many differences. Their relationship could be categorized as accidently complementary, in that the Catholic Worker started in 1933 when unemployment was at its highest and worked with people’s immediate needs for survival such as food, housing, and clothes. The Jesuit labor schools started in 1936 after unemployment was down and they worked with workers on labor negotiations. The two groups complemented each other both in time and in their work. The
Catholic Worker movement met people when they needed to survive, and then the Jesuits worked with the people once they had a job.

Some of the similarities were that The Catholic Worker movement and the Jesuits had been influenced by the same papal encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), and by the writings of Msgr. John Ryan (1869-1945). They also were both located the same area of New York and New Jersey, so they dealt with the same hierarchical figures and the same politicians and policies. Finally, they both were started to help workers and laborers and were working side by side with them, and because of their geographical proximity it is likely that they helped out many of the same people.

From this the case study will present how the two groups took the teachings of the Church and implemented them in their ministries. It will look at how they were similar and how they were different. Finally, it will look at their impact on the Catholic social action movement in America.

Both groups were successful in that they responded to the problems of poverty at the time in the way that they felt they could do so best. Dorothy Day knew that she worked best with people and that she was compassionate, so she chose to express her compassion by starting The Catholic Worker to live with and work closely with the poor. The Jesuits knew that the best way for them to help was through education and teaching the workers about labor laws and different subjects that could be beneficial to them.

The Jesuit labor schools made more of a short term impact than the Catholic Worker for a variety of reasons. First, they came up with an order-wide plan of how to respond to communism, so they had a common vision and common goal. The Jesuits also had a formation
program that gave them a deep knowledge of many theological issues, that gave the men a reputation that allowed them to have credibility when they dealt with theological ideas. These two reasons helped the men to go out to the New York/New Jersey waterfront and surrounding areas to help clean up much of the corruption and to educate men on labor practices.

The Catholic Worker had a much longer lasting impact, while the movement started strong their impact diminished during World War II when the war became the largest issue. The Catholic Worker managed to become more relevant again in the 1960s and has managed to maintain their relevance even today. This is largely due to the figure that Dorothy Day has become. While alive, her commitment to the poor and her unwillingness to step down from the beliefs that she had led the Catholic Worker through difficult times. These principles also made her remembered as one of the leaders of the early Catholic social activism movement in America. Another attribute that led to a long lasting impact to the Catholic Worker was their lack of structure. While the lack of structure hurt the movement at the beginning, the ease that it allowed for people to volunteer for as long as they wanted led to continued successes for a long period of time.

First, it is important to research the Church’s social teachings and to look at many of the major documents that influenced the Church’s social movement. It is necessary to look at the two group’s motives, what influenced them, their goals, their activities, and their relation to the hierarchy of the Church and the State, and the problems that their ministries encountered. Taking special concern for the theological ideas that the two expressed both in speech and in what ideas they implemented from the different encyclicals and writings.
Before it is possible to look at the groups and their activities it is important to look at the background of what the two groups were dealing with and the history that they had to work with.

**State of America**

In October 1929, Wall Street crashed which led to the Great Depression, a decade-long economic recession characterized by high unemployment, deflation, and poverty. During this period in America, the rate of unemployment rose from 3.2% in 1929 to its peak of 24.9% in 1933, which left 60% of the population considered poor. By 1934 there were thirty-four million families with no working income and one million families had lost their farm already in the decade. The country was in disarray and looked for a leader and a new solution. Also at this time, a Catholic radio priest, Fr. Charles Coughlin, gained popularity; his peak numbers reached an estimated 30-45 million people a week.\(^1\) Fr. Coughlin was the most prominent American Catholic at the time and was one of the largest voices that spoke for and to Catholics on many different issues. Coughlin endorsed Roosevelt for President in 1932, and claimed that the “New Deal is Christ’s Deal.”\(^2\) However after a few years and FDR not living up to Coughlin’s expectations, he formed his own party the Union Party, and ran a candidate for president in 1936. Coughlin little by little managed to disenfranchise himself with most Catholics throughout the 1930s, this can be seen in over 66% of Catholics still supporting FDR in 1936, and Coughlin’s popularity continued to lessen throughout the rest of his radio career.\(^3\)

In 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president of the United States. He campaigned on a platform to get the country out of the recession through a group of programs

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called the New Deal. Roosevelt was the governor of New York at the time and during his time as
governor had created the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration, which was the first
program of its kind that provided food, clothing, and housing for the unemployed. During his
campaign he said that *Quadragesimo Anno* was “one of the greatest documents of modern time”
and Roosevelt was almost unanimously supported in 1932 by Catholics. During his first term as
president Roosevelt passed most of the New Deal and started using Keynesian economics of
spending money to give it back to the people, so that they would in turn spend more money that
would stimulate the economy. However, as his presidency continued his support began to wane
as people began to describe his policies as communist and believed that he extended the reach of
government too far; despite the objections he maintained the presidency until his death in 1945.4

Catholics had important roles throughout the life of labor unions. For example, Terence
Powderly, who was the leader of the Knights of Labor in the 1880s was a Catholic and
subsequently much of the membership was also Catholic: an estimated 50%.5 After the Knights
of Labor disbanded, the next largest labor union was the American Federation of Labor (AFL).
It consistently boasted of its high percentage of Catholic members, since most Catholics worked
in urban areas and in unskilled jobs, which were the main attraction for the unions.

Other than these examples, Catholics did not have many prominent roles within the
unions until the 1930’s, partly because the Church never took a definitive stand on the issue of
unions. While the papal encyclicals supported the creation of them, they did not make them
mandatory for Catholics to join them. As a result many priests and church hierarchical figures

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4 Richard Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945: A Brief History with Documents.* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000) 7;
did not take a stand on them, rather than get involved with the different opinions that many people had on them. Catholics began to get more involved in unions, as most people did, in the 1930s. In 1937, the Association of Catholic Trade Unions was started in one of the Catholic Worker Hospitality Houses. Its purpose was to “promote unionization and the attainment of legitimate union objectives while educating Catholic members in the social program of the Church.”

The Church saw unions as one of the best weapons in a fight against socialism and extreme capitalism. They believed that if the unionists were influenced by the Church they would not become socialists, and the Church’s presence in the union meant that they would not favor extreme laissez faire capitalism either.

In the United States, labor unions did not take much action until 1935 when President Roosevelt passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, which stated, “Employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers.” Although this was declared unconstitutional, a similar act, the Wagner Act, was passed a few months later supporting the same union beliefs. Labor unionism was promoted during FDR’s presidency to help get out of the depression and as a result of that, numbers in unions dramatically increased. The next major piece of legislation on labor unions passed in 1947, the Taft-Hartley Act, dictated laws to the unions regarding strikes and how they were allowed to do business.

Church’s Social Teaching

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7 Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945*, 10-11; quoted NIRA section 7 (a)
In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers), which was the first papal encyclical to address the moral status of capitalism and socialism in the modern world. In the encyclical, Leo XIII spoke about the rights that are due to workers and employers, such as the right to a fair wage, respect and dignity by their employers, and safety at the workplace, while the workers were supposed to do their job to the best of their ability, and refrain from violence towards their employers. He condemned both socialism and unrestricted capitalism, believing that there needed to be some balance of the two and affirming the need for private property. *Rerum Novarum* said that the government was important; however, people should still be able to acquire property and capital, under the belief of natural law, an idea that reflected the influences of Thomistic thoughts at the time. Thomism was the theology and philosophy based on St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and was held on as a central teaching by the Church at the time. *Rerum Novarum* spoke of giving dignity and rights to each worker so that they would not overwork themselves, and also called for fair wages and supported the creation of some labor unions. It was also the first place where the preferential option for the poor was discussed and said that workers should refrain from violence and rioting in strikes and that they should perform the tasks that they agree upon.

This encyclical somewhat shook Catholics as it was the first modern encyclical on social justice and social action. Both Catholics and non-Catholics praised it for calling employers to begin to respect workers and to give them the rights that they were due. It did a very good job at laying the groundwork for many different people’s writings on the social question and on workers rights.

*Rerum Novarum* also influenced many different religious thinkers and scholars. One of the most prominent in the United States was Msgr. John A. Ryan. Ryan’s most influential
writing was his doctoral thesis “A Living Wage,” in which he advocates for the institution of a living wage, or a wage that is adequate for a man to support himself and his family, Ryan argued that “the wage earner is a person, not a thing, nor a mere animal. Because he is a person, he has certain needs that are not felt by animals, and his needs and his welfare have a certain sacredness that does not being to any other species... he has intrinsic worth and dignity. He is made in the image and likeness of God. He is an end within himself.”

Ryan was able to forge the gap between the American beliefs based on John Locke’s theory, which was very individualistic and led to the laissez faire extremism of the time, and the Church’s version of natural law that every person is worthy of their dignity as a human person, and that this dignity should not be violated. Ryan was also able to make a point that the social question involves both economics and morality, and that state intervention can be necessary to help guarantee this dignity and respect of the human person. Ryan believed that the American spirit of capitalism could be compatible with this Church’s spirit of giving people dignity and respect, if the government was able to have authority over business actions and policies.

Msgr. Ryan also played an important part on the National Catholic Welfare Council, (NCWC) a group formed in 1919 to discuss and issue statements of national problems such as welfare, education, and health care. That year Msgr. Ryan headed the council that produced a document entitled “Bishops’ Program of Social Reconstruction” which wrote on a number of different measures that they wanted to see happen in America. They advocated for a national minimum wage, insurance against unemployment and health, a minimum working age, support

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8 Thomas Massaro and Thomas A. Shannon, American Catholic Social Teaching. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2002) 50; using Ryan’s essay A Living Wage

9 David O’Brien, American Catholics and Organized Labor in the 1930’s, 326; Schultze, Strangers in a Foreign Land, 70
of labor organizations, among other things. Later on, in the 1930’s the NCWC supported most of the New Deal proposals, however after World War II, they started focusing on other issues than the social question and did not address them again until the 1960s.

In 1931, after much was written on the social question Pope Pius XI issued another encyclical on this issue, entitled *Quadragesimo Anno*. (In the 40th year) It covered many of the same issues as *Rerum Novarum* such as the belief that private property is essential to human dignity. However, it was necessary to re-examine different issues as the Great Depression had deepened and it was necessary to look at the moral issues that surrounded capitalism. Again Pius XI spoke about the evils of communism and socialism and believed that they do not respect a person’s dignity. *Rerum Novarum* also addressed the problems of capitalism, which had started to become apparent at the time, believing that the capitalist and the laborer need to work in a closer partnership. The capitalist needed the laborers to make anything and they needed to treat them with dignity and respect, which was not happening. This document introduced the concept of subsidiarity and social justice, and declared there should be a reconstruction of the current social order so that the employer and employee had a principle of solidarity.

**Jesuit Labor Schools**

While some Jesuits had worked with labor since the beginning of the 20th century, however not on a large scale that the whole order was not committed to on a large scale. Fr. Terrance Shealy had written a series of lectures after being inspired by Pope Leo XIII, and started a School of Social Studies in 1911 that dealt with different social problems during his era. He also took some of the men on spiritual retreats. Fr. Joseph Husslein had become the Jesuits’ answer to Msgr. Ryan. Husslein believed that people would be converted and kept away from
communism and other evils more so by seeing and hearing people like St. Francis of Assisi than by reading a document on the social agenda. Husslein and Shealy laid the groundwork for what future Jesuit labor schools would look like.

In America, during the 1930s and 40s, constant threats and widespread paranoia of a communist takeover, led to a number of anticommunist groups. Their anticommunist belief was the primary ideology that they would use to shape their business and their practices. The Jesuits first experienced this in 1934 when they heard a rumor from their superior general Włodimir Ledóchowski that Communists were planning to take over part of American life in urban areas in 1934. The Jesuits appointed Edmund Walsh to head a new mission and they met in the Midwest and in New York from 1935 to 1936 to come up with the “Establishment of a Christian Social Order.” (XO Plan) From these meetings they decided to start a group of labor schools to help elaborate “Catholic positions with regard to God, Man, Religion, Church, State Society, and Human Rights, meeting directly the Communist position on each of these topics.” The primary goal of setting up these schools was to directly combat socialism and communism, through thirteen different areas such as propaganda, labor activity, political activity, and education.

In 1936 the Xavier Labor School was founded with the goal to combat communism by explaining Catholic social principles and then to apply them to different labor situations. This can be seen even in their location, which was strategically designed to be about half-way between the New York and New Jersey waterfront, which was a site of labor unrest, and Union

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10 McDonough. *Men Astutely Trained*, p 54


Square, which was where many different socialist and communists would go to preach about the evils of capitalism and the Church. Xavier was established around the same time that the Crown Heights School of Catholic Workmen was also opened in Brooklyn. The Jesuits that were assigned to these schools were normally less educated than those assigned to different universities or other positions, however they were passionate about their work with the workers. The Labor School offered different night classes for the working class men on practical applications that they could use such as parliamentary procedures, methods of public speaking, and other similar things. They could use these tools to gain prominence in their unions and in different labor management negotiations.\(^{14}\)

While the primary focus of the men was to assist their labor negotiations skills, the leaders of the schools also wanted to work on the men’s interior lives. Fr. Philip Carey, who led the Xavier Labor School, started in 1940, he set up a number of different retreats in order to make the men more well-rounded. John Delaney, the leader of the Institute of Social Order, also believed that these retreats would allow the men to both have a zeal for the Lord and the ability to lead others with a desire to put Christ’s principles into their workplace.\(^ {15}\)

The Institute of Social Order (ISO) was another Jesuit project which was based in the Xavier Labor School. The goal of the ISO was to be a more theoretical based organization on the social question. It was constantly compared to the *Action Populaire* in France, which was a think tank run by the Jesuits. The first director of the ISO was John Delaney, who was really more of a puppet for Ledóchowski to do what he wanted. Delaney put a large emphasis on family life and would hold different retreats for the workers because he believed that family could hold the


\(^{15}\) McDonough, *Men Astutely Trained*, 115
working class together and that the family was the one thing that could stand the test of time through all of the social changes that may happen. The direction of the ISO was not clear, as its goal was to be a broad national organization, however Delaney wanted to focus on smaller issues. Even after Ledóchowski died and Delaney was removed as the head it did not become any clearer. Some of the Jesuits met again in 1943 to discuss the future of the ISO and the social agenda, and from that they selected Daniel Lord to lead the ISO into making it a national organization. Lord never really had a clear vision for what he wanted and because of that the ISO was never relevant outside of Jesuit circles.\textsuperscript{16}

The Xavier Labor School maintained relative amounts of success throughout its history, however its most famous priest and activity was Fr. John Corridan and his waterfront apostolate. At the time the New York waterfront was the most important waterfront in the country because of both its size and the amount of goods that came through, although it was one of the worst in terms of how men were treated. While other docks such as those in San Francisco, Seattle, and Los Angeles had cleaned up much of their corruption, New York had not. This was mostly due to the lack of help from the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) and the control that the mafia had over the dock. These two groups caused many different problems for the longshoremen because together they had almost direct control of everything on the dock.\textsuperscript{17} The waterfront apostolate was first tried in 1941 by Fr. Philip Carey, when a few longshoremen came to the Xavier school looking for help. Fr. Carey tried to help them, however after a while he realized that the system was too entangled in a mess and that he could not do anything without much help from the government and the police. That was the only try until 1946, when Fr. John

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 112-117
\textsuperscript{17} Edward Swanstrom, \textit{The Waterfront Labor Problem a Study in Decasualization and Unemployment Insurance}. (New York: Fordham UP, 1938) 1
Corridan arrived at the Xavier Labor School. Corridan was first educated on the plight of the longshoremen when he was assigned to Crown Heights in 1941, and when he came to Xavier, Fr. Carey gave him the option to work on the waterfront and he responded “I’d be glad to.”  

The first problem that Corridan set out to work on was the way that the men were treated. The way that the men were picked to work was that they would gather two or three times a day at their pier and it would be one person’s job to select everyone who would work that day. He would pick the number of people based on the need from the ships coming in. If you were selected you worked for a few hours, and if you were not then you did not work that day. This was called the shape-up; it led to some men being regularly picked for work and others not at all. Over half of the workers would earn only about 10% of the wages. The men also did not have any types of insurance or security of work, despite the longshoremen industry having the second highest accident rate of any industry in the country. Even the men who worked often were not wealthy, so if they could only expect to work once a week if that, they could not sustain a living wage or support a family. This led them to think that it was necessary to either join or make deals with the mafia to help them get by financially. The mafia then had a large amount of influence over the men and would call them to do different criminal activities for them, when they needed it, which led to a larger crime problem.

The men were all also part of a union at the time, the International Longshoremen’s Association, (ILA) headed by Joe Ryan. Joe Ryan was Corridan’s biggest problem because he was in a position, as president, to be great help and to help out the men, however, he continued to make problems worse for the men. The problem with Ryan was that he was more of a friend to

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18 Raymond, Waterfront Priest, 58.
the businesses and would rather live a luxurious life and enjoy the perks of being the president than he did negotiating on behalf of the workers. Ryan, was good friends with William “Big Bill” McCormick who owned the largest stevedore company in the pier. Both of these men were also daily communicants and McCormick was arguably the second most important Catholic in New York at the time, the first being Cardinal Spellman. These two were also very close with the police, the politicians, and the mob, which created a huge web that Corridan knew he would have to break if he wanted to change the waterfront.

Corridan came in with the idea that he would gain the support of the men by going to them and meeting them where they were, both spiritually in their lives and physically down at the waterfront. By doing this he wanted to build their trust and show them that there was someone who would be willing to fight for them and to work for their rights. He also wanted to give the men more of a reason to come to the Xavier School, so they could learn more about labor negotiations. Corridan then sought to bring more media attention to the matter and eventually got Malcolm Johnson of the New York Sun. Johnson, with the help of Corridan, in 1949, wrote *Crime on the Waterfront*, an investigative piece which highlighted the different problems on the waterfront and the many different personalities and actors which made up the waterfront. These were picked up by director Elia Kazan who directed the movie *On the Waterfront* based on Johnson’s and Corridan’s experiences.

Corridan’s apostolate started without much success, however after Johnson’s articles began to get published and more publicity came to the problem and action had started to alleviate those problems. Over the course of the next few years, nine different crime commissions were held. The one that actually made a difference occurred in 1953 with the New York State Crime Commission. (NYSCC) The purpose of the crime commission was to look into the criminal
records of many of the union leaders, and the amount of cooperation that the union received through fear and coercion. This commission started to place regulations on the licensing companies and began to clean up some of the major problems. Also at the time the AFL, led by George Meaney, expelled the ILA from its membership. The was the first time the AFL had ever expelled anyone. This was due to massive crime allegations both that the ILA was doing and that they were hiring convicts to work for them, presumably that were part of the mafia. During this process Ryan resigned as president of the ILA and elections were set to take place to see what union would represent the men, the old ILA or the AFL’s branch of the ILA. The election was very heavily contested, and on voting day many of the longshoremen were intimidated and voted for the ILA or they received some benefit from voting for the ILA. A large problem for the election was that to cast a vote a longshoremen had to have worked at the minimum 700 hours over the past year, which meant that 54.9% of the men who had worked as longshoremen were ineligible to cast a vote. The ILA ended up winning the election by 319 votes, and many of the problems on the waterfront continued after the election.

Corridan’s actions on the waterfront, cleaned up much of the corruption. However, there was still a lot of left to do. Corridan believed that when he was reassigned in 1957 that “the outlook on the waterfront is dark.” He believed that because he had lost the election, he had ultimately lost the war against the waterfront. The ILA was still in power, the shape-up was still in effect, and the mafia still controlled many of the actions. However Corridan did enact much change; the ILA was not nearly as powerful as they had once been and many of the criminals were gone as well. The shape-up policy was also much better than it was before hand. The piers

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20 Raymond, Waterfront Priest, 214
21 Ibid, 250; Mello, New York Longshoremen, 75
22 Raymond, Waterfront Priest, 258
had gone down to two shape-ups a day, as opposed to three, and a seniority system was on its way, and he had helped the men get some health care and insurance.

Corridan worked well with Fr. Philip Carey and the Xavier Labor School. Corridan was able to do what Carey wished he could, however Carey did not have time to do it and was not as charismatic and daring as Corridan. The school worked as a place for the men to be trained and for the men to get help with different union tactics, while Corridan was out on the streets actively working for the men. The two took care of most of the bases of enacting the social action part of the gospel and in exemplifying the Jesuit’s social agenda.

The Catholic Worker

*The Catholic Worker* was first published and released on May Day 1933. It was distributed around Union Square for a penny a copy, to show both that it was a business and at the same time criticize the capitalist financial motivations. The paper was the first part of Peter Maurin’s “Three Point Program” for the Catholic Worker, which also wanted to create Houses of Hospitality, and agrarian subsistence farms with the help of Dorothy Day.  

Dorothy Day was born in 1897 in Brooklyn, New York. As a college student at the University of Illinois she became a social activist and began to actively work for the rights of the poor and the exploited with the local Socialist Party. Much of her work mirrored what she would do later in her life, except that religion would eventually take the place of the Socialist Party. She continued her activism throughout the 1910s and 20s getting arrested on a number of occasions and participating in a variety of different marches and hunger protests. Eventually, in 1927 she

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had her first child, a daughter named Tamar, and she desired to have her baptized into the Catholic Church. However, to do so, the Sisters of Charity required Dorothy to learn about the Church and in doing so she was converted.\textsuperscript{24}

After her conversion, Day struggled to connect with people and was very lonely, as most of her past friends despised religion and took her conversion as a betrayal of the socialist movement. She also struggled finding a vocation and what she would do with her life, in 1931 she began writing articles for \textit{Commonweal} and \textit{America}, which sent her to the frontline of social action at the time, to cover different Communist meetings, hunger marches, and strikes. Finally, in 1932 she covered a Communist hunger march in Washington D.C and understood that because she had converted she could not be a part of the movements, however she still wanted to work with the poor. Upon returning to her home in New York City, she met Peter Maurin who influenced her to help him start a Catholic newspaper.\textsuperscript{25}

Peter Maurin was born in 1878 and was the oldest of twenty-two in a peasant family in France. At a young age his parents had him educated by the Christian Brothers who took care of his studies and later sent him to Paris to further his studies. It was in Paris that he began to get involved with the social activism that would characterize French Catholicism. After his youth Maurin drifted away from the Church and eventually immigrated to North America, living in Canada for a few years before moving to America in 1911. It was in America that Maurin became interested in religion again and began to come back to Catholicism and the social agenda. After working at a variety of different jobs for much of the 1920s, Maurin began to go to Union Square to show off his belief and try to attract followers. Eventually, he began to search

\textsuperscript{25} Mel Piehl. \textit{Breaking Bread}, 23-24
harder for listeners and went to *Commonweal* to ask to write some articles. The editor, George Shuster, believed that Maurin was not right for *Commonweal*, however sent him in a direction he thought would guide him, which was Dorothy Day.  

When Maurin went to Dorothy Day’s door in 1932, he went with only a plan of what he wanted, although Day was uncertain as to the success of the plan she believed in the ideals and knew that her background in journalism could help her in the movement and desire to help the poor. Maurin however did not have any resources and because of this the launching of the first newspaper was delayed until mid 1933, and at that point Day thought it would be very symbolic to launch the paper on May Day. With the release of *The Catholic Worker* on May Day 1933, a social movement by the same name, the Catholic Worker, started. It was the centerpiece of Peter Maurin’s three-step program to build a Christian utopian society and to slowly undermine the current capitalistic system by developing their own.

The first issue had moderate success, which led to Day sending the paper to different organizations and magazines for donations for future issues. This strategy worked and Day also found a staff that was willing to volunteer to help out with the paper. The paper gained popularity very quickly, the first issue produced 2,500 copies, but by the end of November, 1933 they were up to 20,000. The paper’s circulation continued to climb. By March 1935 they were up to publishing 65,000 copies, by 1936 they were at 100,000, by 1938 they were at 150,000, and at its highest membership in 1940 it was at 195,000 copies. This success shows how influential *The Catholic Worker* was and the need that people in the Catholic Church saw for a movement such as this. 

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26 Ibid, 57-58
27 Ibid, 67
The relationship between Day and Maurin definitely helped strengthen the success of the Catholic Worker movement. Maurin was seen as more of the thinker or the theorist behind the ideas, while Day was the person that was able to put them into action. Maurin once said, “I enunciate the principles,” while Day was more of the backbone of the operation and was in charge of actually putting into place the theories and ideas that Maurin thought up. They had a very complementary relationship that was centered on social action and radicalism. Where Day fell short in the areas of ideas and coming up with how to use her vocation, Maurin was strong. And where Maurin lacked, in actually making his ideas happen and in organization, Day was strong. The two understood this, and while Day may have gotten frustrated at Maurin’s free spiritedness, lack of structure to his ideas, and his constant talking she understood their relationship and that Maurin meant well and that his ideas and knowledge were integral to the success of the movement. Maurin was also more well versed in Catholic tradition and in theology being educated since an early age, this allowed him to come into conversation with more distinguished and eloquent people than Day would have been able to.

Maurin continued to test Day’s commitment to the movement and her desire to follow what she believed in. After her first article Maurin brought two peasants to her door to be fed almost every day. At first Day was frustrated with the interruptions and the two’s neediness, however after a while Day understood that if she was truly committed to the cause she would need to not just speak about the injustices, but also to actively pursue change and justice in her own actions. With this was the start of the second program of Maurin’s three-point program, the

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28 Ibid, 59
Hospitality Houses. Day began to open her doors to anyone who needed housing or food for as long as they wanted with very little rules, as a way of living out the radical Gospel. 

The Hospitality Houses began to gain popularity and volunteers from across the country would come to volunteer for different lengths of time. For the volunteers there was no commitment and they lived in the same setting as the homeless. By 1941 there were thirty-two Hospitality Houses across the country and another twelve or so not associated with the movement that did the same things. The houses were an important part of the Catholic Worker movement because they put the belief of the movement into action, by not just writing about social concerns but by acting on them and helping out the poor. Many influential people in the Catholic social action arena at one time volunteered for the Catholic Worker. The Catholic Worker would get many volunteers from ex-seminarians, teachers, and many Catholics who were too poor for college as a way to experience the world and to gain valuable life skills.

Eventually, the movement hit a peak and two events caused friction to occur with the Catholic Worker. The first was the movement’s decline in support of labor unions. At the beginning of the movement, the Catholic Worker’s public stand was pro-union because of the benefits that they gave to workers, although Maurin was always against them because of his French influences and the French distrust in unions. At one point the Catholic Worker even started the Catholic Worker Labor School, which was run by volunteers, however this project did not survive very long. Day never fully approved of unions, however she believed that they were the best weapons against the current economic situation. Eventually though, Day changed her viewpoint when she concluded that unions treated labor as a commodity and more so as

29 Ibid, 100
30 Ibid, 109
something that has to happen, while Day viewed labor as a “gift, a holy sacrifice, offered for the joy of building up brotherhood into the measure of the perfect man.” This change in her viewpoint and her decisions to want to create a new Christian society made her change her mind and take back her support for unions. This decision infuriated many volunteers, including John Cort who was the founder and president of The Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU). Day became an opponent of ACTU, claiming that they were making their battle too political and that they were becoming their own sort of ideology in the current capitalist system. Cort had said that Day had an “attitude of indifference bordering on hostility.” Their battles ended up causing both groups to lose support, as many volunteers of the Catholic Worker no longer supported ACTU, and many ACTU members stopped their support for The Catholic Worker.  

The other idea of The Catholic Worker that upset many people was its commitment to pacifism. Day believed in this extreme pacifism, which led to a group of volunteers that left the community and houses. Day had always been a pacifist and this was known by most in the movement from the start however, as the 30s closed, the Spanish Civil War and impending World War II made war a more prominent issue. The Catholic Worker began to post more and more articles about their pacifist stance and condemned the war, while other Hospitality Houses tried to downplay the issue and still focus on more of the social ideas. This issue came to the forefront in 1940 when Day sent out an ultimatum saying that if you wanted to stay in the movement that you would have to believe in the pacifist stance. This led to a controversy with some of the houses, most publicly the Chicago houses and John Cogley. This issue caused many

31 Ibid. 119, 125; David O’Brien, Public Catholicism, 190
people and houses to leave the movement and laid the foundation for how future controversies would be handled, that Day had the final rule on any issue regarding the Catholic Worker.³²

The final point to Maurin’s three-point program was to build farms in a communal style so that people could provide food for themselves in an effort that would eventually end unemployment. These farms started in 1936, when the Catholic Worker acquired land to farm on. The farms began with some success for a few years before things started to get bad. Many that went out to help did not know very much about how to farm and those that did faced too great of an uphill battle to try and provide for everyone. The movement also did not help, when they allowed anyone to come and live there for a whole. The farmers tried to restrict the numbers so that they could provide for a group with some regularity, however the movement denied this request. The movement eventually ended in 1946, with the selling of the first farm and the admission by the movement that it was a failure.³³

Overall, the Catholic Worker did a tremendous amount of work for the Catholic social justice tradition in America and led the doors to many different social groups and thoughts. The Catholic Worker continues to be published today, and Day was the editor until her death in 1980, there also are still many different Hospitality Houses around the United States, however the influence of both started to decline after The Great Depression and their pacifist stances.

Now that there is a basic understanding of the two groups, it is necessary to look at them more in depth individually to gain a better understanding of their actions and how their ministries worked.


³³ Piehl. Breaking Bread, p129; Mello, New York Longshoremen., p 20
Chapter 2: The Jesuits

Influences

The primary influence of the Jesuits was their formation within the order. For Jesuits formation lasted fifteen years before they could take their final vows. Nine of those fifteen years were spent studying philosophy and theology. During this time they studied the *Imitation of Christ* and spiritual directions from Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order. After they professed their final vows they were given their first assignments. The smarter Jesuits would normally be sent to teach at a university or another educational institution, and the others got sent elsewhere -- such as Fr. Corridan who was sent to a labor school.\(^{34}\)

The Jesuits also had a rich history dealing with the popes and the papal social agenda. As their superior general Ledóchowski had wanted, they were very strong educators on social issues. This is part of the reason why Pope Pius XI gave the duty to help write *Quadragesimo Anno* to Ledóchowski and other Jesuits. Many social principles from the social encyclicals were taught and reinforced in the minds of the Jesuits. They also would have had to have read *Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno* and been able to analyze them and apply the main points to different situations. Since the Jesuits had spent so much time in theology and studying they knew these documents better than most people and had a certain credibility when they spoke about them. They would have studied about the Church’s belief in forming interclass relationships as a matter of Christian doctrine. Also, the Jesuits in America were influenced by Msgr. Ryan and his

\(^{34}\) McDonough. *Men Astutely Trained*, 100, 136-137
teachings on a living wage and distributive wealth. This can be seen in their Thomistic though on social issues, specifically their views on the family and their importance and on natural law.  

Finally, the Jesuits were influenced by the work of earlier American Jesuits such as Fr. Shealy and his labor school in the early 20th Century, they also would have taken from the teachings of Fr. Joseph Husslein, who wrote extensively on the social agenda after being influenced by Rerum Novarum and Leo XIII’s commitment to the poor. Husslein spoke extensively on the problem with different political ideologies. He said that capitalism was bad because it led to individualism and greed, which led to others being taken advantage of and used as objects. Socialism, on the other hand, took away from human individuality. Many Jesuits picked up this belief that socialism was bad and should be avoided, while also questioning the motives of capitalism.

For the actual XO plan, the Jesuits were influenced by previous Jesuit undertakings in Europe. They understood that the atmosphere in America was different than Europe, however, they still tried to replicate successful European programs. Specifically they were influenced by Action Populaire and tried to resemble the success that they had with that. These European influences were especially critical to the men that formulated the ideas of the labor schools in the XO plan.

For the influence of individual leaders, John Delaney who was the head of the ISO from 1940-1943 was greatly influenced by papal teaching. He believed that the workers would need to hear and see how much the Catholics were actively doing for them and trying to help them, and not rely as much on dogma and teachings. The encyclicals were good, but a conversion of

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35 Ibid, 135-140
36 Ibid, 75
37 Southern, John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism: 1911 – 1963, 218
people’s hearts would not come from reading a document. Rather, Delaney believed that people would change once they saw document being lived out by individuals.  

Much of Phillip Carey’s influence and motivation came from his family. He said “the terrible thing that came from the Depression – the absolute collapse of a whole society. The fact was that men were walking around… like zombies. Men like my brother, he was a Fordham grad. For three solid years he walked the streets every day looking for work, couldn’t get any. And he’d come home and throw himself on the couch in absolute desperation, just completely wiped out.” Carey saw firsthand what the Depression was doing to people and to families and knew that he had to do something about it. Carey used that as motivation to help others who had experienced the same type of things as his brother. Carey also knew that for some men said “the social encyclicals —they’re just dusty books on a priest’s shelf.’ It was not the way it reads in books at all” and that it was his job to bring those books to life for these men and to take the words in the encyclicals and act on them, applying them to the way that it was.  

John Corridan was primarily influenced by exposure to the problems on the waterfront during his years at the Crown Heights Labor School. From there Corridan was most influenced and motivated to work by the gospel message, specifically Luke chapter 5 where Jesus tells the apostles to cast their nets into the sea after not catching anything and there nets become so full of fish that they break. In the gospel, Peter falls to his knees before Jesus and Jesus tells him that from now on he will be a fisher of men. Corridan said that his job was to look for men and women who would serve God and stand up and fight for their rights.

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38 McDonough, Men Astutely Trained, 115  
39 Ibid, 108  
40 Raymond, Waterfront Priest., 59  
41 Ibid. 259
There were two additional influences on Corridan’s ministry. The first was papal encyclicals. Corridan knew that it was his job to adapt their messages to the waterfront and to what the men went through, however Corridan was influenced more by natural law and Ryan’s interpretation of it. He would not go into very much detail on the Church’s social teaching, but would rather go into detail about natural law and how it is applicable to everyone. He often said, “you do something for the right reason and because it is moral.”

Goals

The Jesuits heard rumors that communists were going to try to start reaching the urban populations in 1934 and they knew that they had to counter this attack so they decided to meet in West Baden, Indiana, in 1935 to discuss how they would stop this. The original goals that came out of these meetings were “to develop a set of “brief, challenging assertions the essential Catholic positions with regard to God, Man, Religion, Church, State, Society, and Human Rights, meeting directly the communist position on each of these topics.” The main goal of their missions was to directly combat and thus halt the spread of communism and socialism. Many of the Jesuits at the time believed that the communists had done a better job at reaching the workers and wanted to change this to stop the spread and growth of communism.

The goal for the ISO was to combine philosophy, propaganda, and social action in a similar way to Action Populaire in France. Their goal was for the ISO to turn into a national organization that people would go to if they were looking for an opinion or for statements on social issues. The goals for the labor schools were less specific, and there was not much cohesion between the different schools, so they generally took the form preferred by their leader. The only

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42 Fisher, On the Irish Waterfront, 99, 126-127
43 McDonough, Men Astutely Trained, 76
procedure that they followed consistently was that they would offer night classes to workers about how to organize and work within different unions under the Wagner Act, which had just been passed.\textsuperscript{44}

Xavier’s main goal was to integrate Christian perspective to counter economic self-interest. Corridan set out to do this by his work to destroy the alliance between business, politics, and union racketeering, so McCormick, Hague, and Ryan. In doing so Corridan believed that this would both create a better atmosphere and more dignity for the men and secondly would stop the men from joining communist organizations. \textsuperscript{45}

Another goal of the Jesuits was to develop men’s faith lives. Many of the men that they were working with had low self-esteem from being maltreated at work and from having stress at home due to financial problems. The Jesuits wanted to work with the “whole man”, which meant improving their prayer lives, fostering self worth, and educating them on labor issues. Once the men began to grow deeper in their faith they would be more likely to share this faith with those that they meet and would help to Christianize the rest of their labor unions. This was also a very Catholic principle to work with the men’s families because they knew that the men received most of their self worth from work and their homes, and if one of these was not going well, then the man would be upset with himself and would have a lower self esteem and self worth.\textsuperscript{46}

Activities

\textsuperscript{44} McDonough, \textit{Men Astutely Trained}, 38
\textsuperscript{45} Raymond, \textit{Waterfront Priest}, 94
The activities at the Xavier Labor School were meant to make things better for the workers, because when conditions were bad and they were mistreated at work communism would thrive. So the Jesuits wanted to do what they could to help make things better, and they knew that the best way for them to do this was to educate the men. They offered classes once a week on things such as parliamentary procedure, public speaking, and other topics which would make the men more comfortable and formidable in union meetings and in dealing with their superiors. They also taught things such as labor ethics classes. The Jesuits often got laymen to teach these classes because they knew that Jesuits were too academic to make the principles understood by the men, and not all of the men would be open at the meetings if they saw priests in the room.

The Xavier School also had different retreats and devotions for the men to try to increase their faith lives, so that they could go back to their unions and ‘Christianize’ them. To do this though they showed the men that their jobs were holy and that every job helped to glorify God and the whole body of Christ. Some of the ways that they did this was by showing the men that Jesus was a worker when he could have come into the world as a king or anything that he wanted. Christ also chose his apostles from the working class to go and preach to the world. This was in some ways what the Jesuits also were trying to do, that they were the Christ-like figure making laboring men their apostles to go out and convert the world. They also encouraged devotions to St. Joseph, because Joseph was a carpenter and a worker his entire life. Jesuits emphasized that workers’ jobs were actually very important for people of the world.

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47 Raymond, *Waterfront Priest*, 109
48 McDonough, *Men Astutely Trained*, 100
49 McShane, “The Church Is Not for the Cells and the Caves”, 292-297
The ISO wrote different letters and documents that explained diverse social problems and Jesuit opinion and belief on them. While the ISO was in New York, John Delaney emphasized different retreats in the area that focused on family life because he believed that your family was the only thing that you could count on amidst the changing times. However, when Delaney left in 1943 the goal of the ISO became more national and they stopped focusing on retreats and instead focused solely on informing people of the social issues. 50

When Corridan arrived at Xavier not many people attended the classes, so he took to the streets in order to bring the men to him. He tried to find a few good men, who would stand up against the tyranny of the ILA and fight for their dignity and rights. To o this Corridan stepped into a waterfront full of guns, threats, briberies, and slander to do what he believed was necessary for the workers and for the greater kingdom of God. He stood with the workers and fought for their rights and rallied support for them, by giving talks to different groups and gave talks that publicized their plight in order to get more governmental involvement in the waterfront. One of the most notable things that he did was that he publicly supported the rank and file workers in the strikes of 1948 and 1951. Corridan’s work is best exemplified by the quote from Fr. Barry in the movie On the Waterfront when he said “boys, this is my church. If you don’t think Christ is here on the waterfront, you got another guess coming.” This speech gives the best idea of what Corridan believed that Christ was on the waterfront and that it was his job to show that to the men and to work for what he believed Christ would want to happen on the

50 McDonough, Men Astutely Trained, 112-114
waterfront. By doing this he was taking a risk, fighting for men who were often mistaken for communists because they were seeking more rights and privileges.  

Corridan made sure to help counsel some of the men privately, because Corridan believed that the men’s home lives were just as important as their lives on the docks. He said “The Catholic Church lays great stress on the sanctity of marriage and the home. Men who are insecure in their jobs or home are men in trouble. I’ve been trying to make longshoremen more secure both in jobs and homes” Corridan cared for the men that he worked with and worked with their whole selves. He also understood that he would have to go to the men, in the way the Jesus came to the world and went out and sought the apostles, he was looking for his apostles who would help him fight his battle and fight against the injustices that were happening to them. While most people in the Catholic Church and even at Xavier were waiting for the men to come to them, he took it upon himself to go out and be a “fisher of men.”

One of the most politically charged activities that Corridan did was openly support the strike of 1951 and then support the AFL-ILA ticket that formed in the longshoremen elections. Corridan believed that the AFL-ILA would rely on the state and federal authorities to start an investigation on the waterfront and that they could ultimately clean up the waterfront, and even though this would have been beneficial it was still very risky for him to do it since he was openly going against many prominent Catholics in the area, however he went around to different

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51 Raymond, Waterfront Priest, 71, 85, 94; On the Waterfront, directed by Elia Kazan, produced by Sam Spiegel, performed by Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, Lee J. Cobb. (1954, Columbia Pictures); The character Father Barry was portrayed off of Fr. Corridan and Corridan consulted with Kazan in making the film.

52 McDonough, Men Astutely Trained, 260
organizations and different piers giving speeches in support of the AFL-ILA, until they ultimately lost the election.\textsuperscript{53}

Hierarchy

It is important to look at hierarchy because unlike the other areas that look specifically within the groups, hierarchy deals with how others saw the two movements. Hierarchy shows how well the two movements worked with the Church at the time, and shows how well they were able to portray Catholic teaching. If either group had swayed far from Church teaching, the hierarchy would have made sure to reprimand them or voice their opposition. Also, since both of the groups dealt with Archbishop Cardinal Spellman, who was a conservative Catholic, it shows how the two movements dealt with different opinions within the Church.

The Jesuit Labor Schools had many different relationships with different hierarchical figures. First off, it is necessary to note that the Jesuits had to deal with both Church hierarchy and state authorities. In the Church they had to answer directly to three different people: the Pope, their Superior General, and the archbishop who was in charge of the Church in their diocese. The Jesuits took the normal three vows of a religious order of poverty, chastity, and obedience to their superior, but they also took another a fourth vow of direct obedience to the Pope. In the state they had to deal with different authority figures within the government in order to continue their ministries, and for Corridan because he hoped that they would help him with his efforts on the waterfront.

The most important person that the Jesuits had to appease was the Pope, which during this period included Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII. While the popes did not deal with the

\textsuperscript{53} Mello, \textit{New York Longshoremen}, 78
individual labor schools, they did deal with the Jesuits as a whole. The Jesuits had a great deal of influence with Pius XI, especially in regards to social issues. This can be seen by Pius XI selecting their Superior General, Wlodimir Ledóchowski, to be a major contributor to *Quadragesimo Anno*. Pius XII did not directly address with many social issues during his papacy because he was predominantly preoccupied with Mussolini’s Italy and World War II, however he also had close relations with the Jesuit order.

Secondly, the Jesuits needed to keep their Superior General satisfied. Ledóchowski always believed that the Jesuits needed to be involved with the social problems of their time, however he believed that much of the social activism should be done through them teaching and educating others and not day-to-day politics and social activism. Despite this belief when he heard about the rumors that the Communists were going to make large claims in urban America he allowed them to become more involved and established the labor schools to help defeat communism on the ground. Ledóchowski was satisfied with the labor schools as a whole, however had he not died in 1940 he may not have been very happy with how close Fr. Corridan got to the longshoremen and how he entrenched himself in the worker’s plight.

The hierarchical figure in the Church who dealt most with the day-to-day operations of the labor schools was the Archbishop of New York, who at this time was Frances Cardinal Spellman. Spellman had graduated from Fordham University, a Jesuit university and had respected the Jesuits throughout his priesthood. He was not a big proponent of unions, having had his own troubles with them in 1948 when the diocesan gravediggers went on strike, but he did not openly try to stop unions from forming or purposely impede their growth. Spellman did however have to deal with allegations of misconduct from Fr. Corridan. Spellman had appointed Msgr. O’Donnell the “official representative of the waterfront,” and O’Donnell had many
conflicts with Corridan. O’Donnell had grown close to many of the leaders of the ILA, who also financially supported his parish. These were many of the men that Corridan had a problem with and had actively tried to stop. While O’Donnell’s objections to Corridan created problems for Corridan, they did not result in anything serious until the strike of 1951, when allegations were made that Corridan had started the strike and was involved in physical fights with some of the longshoremen. This forced Spellman to call Corridan and Phillip Carey to his office for a meeting. Spellman told Corridan that he should keep his distance from day to day waterfront activities, but he was freed of the allegations against him. When the New York State Crime Commission began they had called Corridan before them to speak of the injustices that he had seen and heard from the men, however out of respect to Spellman’s wishes he declined in the invitation.  

At the same time Corridan also worked with Archbishop Walsh, the Archbishop of Newark. Walsh was much less assertive than Spellman and did not have as much influence with each of the priests of his diocese, while Spellman’s influence was felt by all of the priests of his diocese. Walsh gave each parish more leniency on their actions and their support of different organizations. For Corridan this meant that he did not have to deal with Walsh much and he only had to deal with a few priests who were publicly against him.

Finally, the Jesuits tried to stay in the good graces of the local government. This was difficult to do on the Jersey side of the pier as the mayor for much of the first part of the 20th century was Frank Hague, who had close connections with Joe Ryan and Bill McCormick and was just as much of the problem as these men were. Hague also was supported by many of the

local priests, as much of his city was Catholic, and he put about a dozen of them on his payroll as chaplains. On the New York side of the waterfront, Corridan helped to influence Governor Thomas Dewey to support his mission. Dewey campaigned on trying to “free the waterfront of its criminal activity,” however he did not follow through with many of his promises. He continued to let the waterfront operate as it was and even supported Joe Ryan, because he thought that Ryan was actively fighting against communism. Eventually though, after the strike of 1951, when the activities of what was happening on the waterfront came out, Dewey supported Corridan’s work to try and defeat the ILA.

Problems

The Jesuits faced many different problems from people and institutions outside of their order. Each of their ministries encountered difficulties along the way, some were small and others crippled their progress.

The ISO’s had two major problems. The first was that the American bishops had created the NCWC, which covered most of what the ISO wanted to accomplish and since the bishops all supported the NCWC they did not support the ISO. If the ISO had ever gotten off the ground the bishops may have done more to try and either assimilate the two or stop the ISO, but since it never got off the ground there was no need for this. Secondly, they did not have a clear direction. It was constantly referred to as the American version of the Action Populaire. However, since America was in a much different place than France both religiously and politically what worked in France did not work in America. This lack of direction and the Jesuit’s desire to make it a

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56 Mello, *New York Longshoremen*, 28
57 Fisher, *On the Irish Waterfront*, 222
national organization too fast led to it being moved from New York to St. Louis in 1943, to be more centrally located, however they still did not have much direction and the program eventually folded.\textsuperscript{58}

The Xavier Labor School’s biggest problem was that it could not attract a lot of working men to its classes. Part of this reason was because the men were scared to go and believed that if the wrong person saw them entering there could be action taken by the mob, or they could just not get hired out anymore.

Fr. Carey had trouble with his first attempt at the waterfront. In 1941 a group of longshoremen came to him and asked for his help to try and form a union. Carey tried to help them, however he did not prepare for the difficulties that he would come against in the form of the ILA and their bureaucracy. The union ended up never getting established and most of the men who Carey helped were forced to either move or find different jobs for their own security.\textsuperscript{59}

Fr. Corridan had more problems than the rest of the Jesuits because he went out to the waterfront and directly combated the evils that he saw, and in doing so created many enemies. Three of his biggest problems were the men he was actively working against in Ryan, McCormick, and Hague. They were problems for him because Corridan’s goal was to get all of them fired or put in prison, and all of them were powerful so they had many people who supported them and would back anything that they did. What hurt Corridan the most about these three, was that they were all faithful practicing Catholics, and they could go to mass on Sunday and then “think nothing of treating their fellow human beings like dirt every day in the week.

\textsuperscript{58} McDonough. \textit{Men Astutely Trained}, 128  
\textsuperscript{59} Raymond. \textit{Waterfront Priest}, 50-58
They seem to forget that every man is precious in the eyes of our Lord and that He died for all of us, as brothers in Christ Jesus and not just for the privileged few.\textsuperscript{60}

The worst problem out of the three men was ILA leader Joe Ryan. Ryan had earned the title of president for life and was basically a dictator of the longshoremen union. Although he was in charge of the longshoremen union he did not care much about the interest of the workers, he cared more about living a luxurious life. He was also very stubborn in his ways when Corridan first questioned the humanity of the shape up, Ryan responded saying that the shape up is just how things are done. Ryan also had a faithful group of supporters that firmly backed everything he did; among them was Msgr. O’Donnell, who was Ryan’s pastor and good friend. O’Donnell’s philosophy was that he stayed out of Ryan’s life on the waterfront and Ryan would stay out of O’Donnell’s pastoral duties. This allowed O’Donnell to excuse the inhumanity that Ryan oversaw and still accept the generous donations that Ryan gave to the Church. This made life difficult for Corridan because even priests of his own faith were backing Ryan, and so were other longshoremen. One longshoreman wrote to Corridan saying all I can say as a Catholic why don't you confine your duties to the Church what a laugh the Reds must have got out of you. You a Priest trying to hurt a man (Ryan) who goes to Mass and also pays many a Bill for the Guardian Angel Church."\textsuperscript{61}

Ryan also set up an anti-communist fund, that he would make the men contribute to if they wanted to work. That way Ryan could tell Governor Dewey that he did his best to fend off communism and show how he got all of the men to support the cause, but Ryan was actually using the money for his own vacations and other personal goods. He would use it to take out

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, XI-XII
politicians and other important figures in order to keep them close to him and give them a reason not to support him as president of the ILA. Ryan was a smart man and knew that he had entrenched himself in a very firm structure that would keep him secure in his position. Corridan continued to fight against Ryan until Ryan resigned in 1953 after the AFL had expelled the ILA from their control. 62

The shape up was the cause of most of the problems that happened on the waterfront. 63 The way the shape up worked was there would be one hiring stevedore for each pier that would hand pick the men he wanted to work that day based on how many men were needed to work. 99 out of 100 times names were submitted to the hiring boss before the day, so that he would know whom the ILA and the mob wanted to work. 64 This was the easiest way for ILA to keep everyone in order by controlling who worked and who did not. That way the workers were completely subservient to the ILA and mob, so when the ILA came by and asked for money for various things such as anti-communists funds or the Joe P. Ryan Memorial Dinner most men gave money even if they did not have money to spare. If you did not give money then you could expect not to work for a long time as a punishment.

The shape up also helped to increase the effect that the mafia had on the men. If the longshoremen did not have enough money to pay bills or for food they would go to a loan shark for a loan. After this there were two options for the loan shark to obtain their money back. Either the loan shark would make sure the man was selected for the shape up so that he could pay the loan shark back, or the loan shark would take the longshoremen’s name to the mafia who would send him out on a mission to take care of his loan. This is how good men got associated with the

62 Mello, New York Longshoremen, 31, 49-50
64 Fisher, On the Irish Waterfront, 94
mafia, they would start clean and in order to provide for their family they would get sucked into
the mafia and would become part of the problem. After the NYSCC had finished their
investigation they found that over a third of the ILA leadership had criminal records and even
more had associations to criminal activity.\(^6\)

The shape up also helped with voter intimidation. Among many things that the ILA used
for voter intimidation, they told people that they would go neighborhood by neighborhood and
check to see if there were to many people who voted the wrong way and if there were more than
they expected they would punish the entire neighborhood, or not hire any of them for a while as
part of a punishment.\(^6\)

In Bill McCormick, Corridan had an enemy that was more of an enigma than anything.
Most people knew that someone had pulled the strings, but they did not know who until the
NYSCC in 1953. So while Corridan opposed the greed of McCormick he never attacked
McCormick or even met him. Although he did speak out against the greed of people like
McCormick, believing that people like this were the root of the problem that the “love of a lousy
buck, whether it’s one or a thousand or ten thousand…They see supposedly Catholic-educated
men chase a buck as if Christ didn’t exist, and hide behind their professional Catholicity.”\(^6\)
McCormick was at the top of this greedy list, between October 1950 and September 1951
Moore-McCormick made a profit of 19 million dollars. While there were 41,000 longshoremen
and of them 11,000 worked less than 100 hours and 3,000 worked between 100 and 200 hours.\(^6\)
The stevedore companies wanted to keep the amount of longshoremen high so that they could
control enough of the men to do whatever they wanted, and also there were peak times for

\(^6\) Raymond. *Waterfront Priest*, 59, 111; Mello, *New York Longshoremen*, 78
\(^6\) Mello. *New York Longshoremen*, 35
\(^6\) Raymond. *Waterfront Priest*, 89-90
\(^6\) Ibid. 42
shipping that required a high number of people and the companies cared more about having man
power for those peak times than they did the dignity of the people that would only work during
those times.

Another problem that came from the men who did not work 700 hours is after the strike
of 1948 full time employees were given basic benefits. To be considered a full time employee
though you had to work 700 hours and in 1952-1953 year 54.9% of men worked less than this
time and did not receive benefits and could not vote in the union elections. This was another way
that the ILA could help control the elections by not letting the majority of the opposition to vote.

There was not much that Corridan could do about Frank Hague. Hague once proclaimed
that “I am the law”\textsuperscript{70} and there was not much that Corridan could do about that, he was
democratically elected and had hidden any bad things that he had done. Although he created
problems for Corridan on the Jersey City side of the pier, Corridan had bigger rivals in Ryan and
McCormick and knew that if he could get a state of federal commission to happen that there was
nothing Hague could do. Until then Corridan could try to stop some of the violence that was
sanctioned by Hague and other politicians and mobsters.\textsuperscript{71}

These were all problems that Corridan faced in both his battle and in trying to find people
to fight against these institutions. That was Corridan’s most difficult battle was finding people
who would be willing to stand up against the ILA and demand that they should be treated better,
because if they were heard and lost then they knew that their jobs, family, and/or lives could be
in jeopardy.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, 75
\textsuperscript{70} Fisher, \textit{On the Irish Waterfront}, 36
\textsuperscript{71} Mello. \textit{New York Longshoremen}, 23
Chapter 3: The Catholic Worker

Influence

People who worked for the Catholic Worker paper were influenced by a variety of different sources. The first and primary influence came from Day and Maurin themselves. Unlike the Jesuits, the Catholic Worker did not have any set education for their volunteers, so Day and Maurin were able to teach their own beliefs. Even in cases where volunteers disagreed with the leadership, volunteers lacked public status for it to matter. This left Day and Maurin with the most powerful influence on The Catholic Worker.

Maurin and Day drew many of their beliefs from resources like Church documents. Maurin thought in a Thomistic fashion, evident in his goals to work toward the common good. The Catholic Worker movement wanted to work to provide for everyone, not just a group of people, which is why Maurin wanted to create a new society within the old society; it would be a new society where everyone is taken care of. They also looked at things in a Thomistic way in that they started with natural law and divine revelation, then worked at virtues in society, and from there they came up with specific social action.72 Furthermore the encyclicals helped to reinforce Day’s ideas and outlined a format of things the Church wanted to be done.

Day and Maurin’s own personal formation and beliefs were vastly shaped by their backgrounds. Day had always been passionate about serving the poor and working for the respect of the workers. Many of her early influences included people such as Jack London and Upton Sinclair, people who were important and influential from the early class consciousness fights in America. From an early age she possessed the qualities needed to make the Catholic

72 Day., The Long Loneliness., 170; Piehl; Breaking Bread., 50
Worker successful; she was only waiting for the additions of her belief in God and desire for religion.\footnote{Dorothy Day, Robert Ellsberg, \textit{By Little and By Little: The Selected Writings of Dorothy Day}. (Knopf. New York. 1983) XV; Piehl, \textit{Breaking Bread}. 8-9}

Later in her life she was greatly inspired by \textit{Imitation of Christ}, and believed that being a Christian at its very core meant imitating Christ. She thought the best way she could personally imitate Christ was to imitate the Catholic masses: “their poverty, their dignity, their communal spirit, their devotion to church and family, their special generosity to their brother who was down on their luck.”\footnote{Paul Elie, \textit{The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage}. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 51-52} This is what truly inspired Day and gave her daily affirmation in her belief that it is necessary to serve the poor to serve God.

An influential piece of Maurin’s past was his involvement with the Christian Brothers, the main source of his education which also taught him the basics of French social programs. Maurin utilized ideas which he got from different French groups such as L’Espirit and \textit{Sillion}. From L’Espirit, Maurin adopted his belief in personalism and his endeavor to find an alternative to French intellectualism and Marxism by looking for answers to the social and moral problems. From \textit{Sillion}, he drew ideas for the format of \textit{The Catholic Worker} and its description on ethics. Day also was influenced from \textit{Sillion} regarding their dealings with ethics and with the changing times.\footnote{Day, \textit{The Long Loneliness}, p. 177; Piehl, \textit{Breaking Bread}. 57, 71}

Finally, they were both influenced by the many Russian writers of the time such as Dostoevski and Berdyaev. Dostoevski’s writings portrayed selfless Christian love, spiritual and moral freedom, and a religious significance to the poor. Berdyaev’s works explored the connection between Christian freedom and social transformation. They were also both influenced
by Jacques Maritain, a French philosopher. Maritain believed the truth to living a good life and to following Christ’s plan was in reading the Gospels and acting as they say we should. He believed that when you are working for truth and justice you are working for Christ. Maritain was one of the most influential inspirations for the entire Worker movement and came to speak to them on a number of different occasions.\textsuperscript{76}

The most influential text to both Day and Maurin was the Bible. They both read and believed they needed to work for the poor and the destitute as Jesus did. They believed the poor were those chosen by God for others to show them compassion and caring, and that in serving them people would be serving God. They believed at the end of the day it did not matter how much someone knew or how important someone was, but that all would be judged upon the Works of Mercy; in performing them and giving people food, shelter, and clothing the more fortunate could give the poor reason to have faith. They also acknowledged a major problem with society was that it had been separated from The Gospel and had lost its divine purpose. Instead of developing useful people and ideas for the common good, the main concerns were profits and power; it was their job in the Church to do something about this.\textsuperscript{77}

Day was also influenced very much by her communist past. It gave her initial love for the poor and vulnerable, and gave her a great commitment to work to give people the basic needs to live and survive. She also worked hard against injustices in the workplace and for dignity and respect for everyone. These values she continued to have as she converted, however, instead of grounding them in her own beliefs and communist ideals they were grounded within Catholic tradition and the Gospel message. She also understood how much the Communists were doing

\textsuperscript{76} Day & Ellsberg, \textit{By Little and By Little}, 112, 174; Piehl, \textit{Breaking Bread.}, . 72-73

\textsuperscript{77} Day & Ellsberg, \textit{By Little and By Little}, XXXIV, 91, 100
for the workers and how little the Church was actually doing for the workers. This gave her a greater motivation to work for not only herself, but for the whole Church.

Goals

The Catholic Worker did not have any concrete goals but most of their goals could be summed up in one of Maurin’s “Easy Essays” on his three point plan. In it he outlined what he wanted the Catholic Worker to provide which was:

- Alleviation of the immediate needs of the poor and indoctrination by example through voluntary poverty and the practice of the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual.
- Clarification of thought through the CATHOLIC WORKER, leaflets, articles, discussions and meetings.
- Houses of Hospitality in every poor parish to practice mutual aid, hospitality and charity, houses which would also provide workshops where the unemployed could be employed and where the unskilled could become skilled.
- Farming communes, or agronomic universities, which would be founded on the faith and poverty of the Irish universities which housed scholars and students from all over Europe and which in turn evangelized the world, and which in turn in our day could become Christian communities of families where the communal and private aspect of, property could be restored, and man would receive according to his needs.  

In summation, they wanted to take care of the poor by giving them a place to stay, food to eat and by caring about them. In this they would also live with them in solidarity so the people they were caring for could see they truly cared about them and desired to be one with them. Then they also wanted to move back to the farms, which was a common theme among people in the Church who believed industrialization was bad for families and it was bad in that it treated people as objects and as means to certain ends.

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78 Piehl, Breaking Bread, 60; this was Maurin’s ‘Easy Essay’ entitled “three point program” written in June 1933
Another less important goal of the Catholic Worker was to keep the workers from becoming communist or socialist. This was a major goal of the Catholic social message and was important for Day since she had previously been a Communist. However, they believed that if they accomplished their primary goals of serving the poor that this would just fall into place. The biggest fault the Catholic Worker found in communist ideology was with its attitude on work. They believed communism led workers to be treated as objects, or as a commodity for production, in the same way they viewed capitalism. Instead, Day and the Catholic Worker believed that work was holy, and that there was a certain sacramentalism to having your own property. 79

With this, their goal was to put the Catholic social action into place, because it was said that “the Catholic Church is emphatically the workingman’s Church” 80 and William Howard Taft called Catholicism “the bulwark against socialism and anarchy in this country”. 81 Although some people in The Church did much for the workingmen, the Catholic Worker saw that there was a huge gap in things that needed to be done. For example, it was great that many intellectuals could look at the Pope’s encyclicals, the writings of Msgr. Ryan and the writings of the bishops, but if no one was out practicing these things it reduced the writings to words. This is what hurt Day, in that most people either did not know about Catholic Social thought or did not understand it; when around 2/3rds of Catholics were considered lower class, it was important that they know that people within the Church were working for them. She believed it was exactly when these

79 Day & Ellsberg, By Little and By Little , 250, 271
80 Piehl. Breaking Bread., p.34
81 Ibid. p40
lower classes do not think anyone is willing to help them that they become communist or give up completely on the Church.\textsuperscript{82}

Activities

The activities of the Catholic Worker revolved around the goals they set out to work toward. They created a newspaper, \textit{The Catholic Worker}, where they could freely discuss different events and speak about social questions. It was based on the \textit{Sillon}, which was a liberalizing republican Catholic movement, that both ran hospices and also published a paper, and on \textit{L’espirit} a group of French intellectuals who tried to engage religion with the moral and social issues of the day, and introduced the concept of personalism.\textsuperscript{83} The paper was very successful initially and because of this success the Catholic Worker made a name for itself and this name recognition helped the rest of the movement grow. At its peak it produced 1,000,000 copies and was run completely by volunteers. The leadership dynamic running the paper worked well because Day and Maurin’s styles complemented each other very well: Maurin’s theological and philosophical knowledge with Day’s personal experience and organizational ability. The two became dependent on each other and were able to complement each other’s shortcomings most of the time to make the paper work.

The second point of Maurin’s plan was to build Houses of Hospitality that could nurture the people and give them a place to stay and eat. These were mildly successful. At their peak there were 32 houses, however, that number diminished when questions of authority and rules made a few groups leave. In 1950, they gave out 460,000 meals and provided shelter for people

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid. 30, 54
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. 57, 77
to sleep a total of 18,250 nights. These are concrete examples that prove they were at least somewhat successful at alleviating poverty and giving the poor a place to stay. However, since their only concrete goals included Maurin’s three point plan, the success of each goal is unclear since they lacked objective standards, because Maurin wanted to create a new political system. If the evaluation asks if they changed the political agenda then the answer is no, they failed; yet, in a tangible evaluation of their service to the poor, they were much more successful than other groups and movements that were just like them.

A major contributor to the Catholic Worker’s success was Day’s character. She actually enjoyed working with people and had seen them abused and stripped of their dignity by both sides of the political system, by both communists and capitalists, and wanted to change this. She did not see them as just “workers” or a problem, but saw their true human character, and because of this she made no distinction in the type of poor that people were. She treated both the ‘deserving’ poor and the ‘undeserving’ poor equally, while many people only wanted to help the ‘deserving’ poor.

Finally, the third part to Maurin’s plan was to create a farming commune, which was the last of the points to happen in 1936. The farming communes were supported for a few years by some volunteers who were very good farmers. However, after about ten years, due to a variety of circumstances including financial losses, underproduction of enough crops to sustain life with the amount of people that lived there, and a lack of farming expertise, they were eventually sold and the communes were deemed failures.

Hierarchy

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84 Day & Ellsberg, *By Little and By Little*. 104
85 Piehl, *Breaking Bread*. 2, 106
The Catholic Worker had an interesting relationship with hierarchy. Since it was not affiliated with the Catholic Church it was not subservient to any figure in the Church, yet still tried to stay in the Church’s good graces. Usually the police and government officials did not have any problems with the Catholic Worker because it never raised any suspicious activity. They did, however, garner attention from J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI, both concerned that it was secretly a communist organization trying to infiltrate the Church and American life. On three different occasions he recommended to the Attorney General to look into cases of sedition on the Catholic Worker; despite this none of these accusations damaged the Catholic Worker as it was accustomed to people referring to them as communists.86

Within the Church, the Catholic Worker did try to maintain a cordial relationship with the Archbishop of New York, who at the time was Cardinal Spellman. Day said “if Cardinal Spellman would have ordered me to close down the Catholic Worker tomorrow, I would.”87 So although Day was not required to answer to Church hierarchy, it was still important to her to show them respect and maintain good relations by putting value in what the bishop had to say.

The relationship between the Catholic Worker and Cardinal Spellman was better than it could have been. Spellman was a more conservative bishop who was not very supportive of labor unions or the social agenda, yet he did not intervene against it or try to stop its progress in any way. The one exception was in 1949 when the gravediggers for the archdiocese went on strike demanding better rights. When Spellman refused to give into the gravediggers’ requests, The Worker spoke out against Spellman and publicly supported the gravediggers. Though this infuriated Spellman to see dissension in his own diocese he respected their opinions, and

86 Day & Ellsberg, By Little and By Little. XXX
87 Piehl, Breaking Bread, 93
continued to refuse to meet their demands. The Catholic Worker was very thankful to Spellman because they knew that they were lucky that he never tried to shut them down and that he was open to their beliefs even though he did not share them.\textsuperscript{88}

**Problems**

Unlike the Jesuits, whose problems came more from outside groups, much of the Catholic Worker’s came from inside their movement and through different people who were involved. These problems came in many different ways, from both Maurin and Day’s personal shortcomings, to problems that other volunteers had caused for the Catholic Worker. Part of the reason for the internal problems was that Day and Maurin were completely in charge of the Catholic Worker and received very little help from other outside sources. While the leaders of the Jesuits may have had problems, as an Order they had more support from other people when situations went awry. Instead, Day and Maurin were solely responsible not only for any mistakes made, but also for the consequences that followed.

The first problems were simply problems with Day and Maurin. The root of many of Day’s problems was that she tended to be very stubborn and did not have a large knowledge of Catholic beliefs and tradition. Her stubbornness got her in trouble when she would make mistakes or not back down on some of her beliefs such as her pacifism. Her lack of knowledge was problematic because in her stubbornness she doubted her own ability to form complex theoretical ideas for the future of the Catholic Worker. This caused her to rely on Maurin for

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. 92; Day & Ellsberg, *By Little and By Little*. 172, 179-180, 334-337; Despite Cardinal Spellman not openly supporting The Worker as archbishop it was noted in his obituary as one of the major accomplishments of his reign
many of her opinions and in doing so, gave him more influence and power in her leadership than was beneficial. 89

Maurin’s problems were rooted mostly in his beliefs that came from his French background. He tended to have some anticlerical beliefs which sometimes discouraged readers from subscribing, reading, or giving any value to the Catholic Worker. His radical views created more opposition than the paper needed. He also did not like unions or the wage system because he believed they both relied on the system and encouraged it, and he wanted to create a new system. Maurin had many radical ideas but he did not have very good organizational skills. This made him a good partner with Day, however, it also caused a great deal of stress for Day because she was forced to hear all of his opinions and attempt to translate which of them were legitimate and realistic, and which ones were far fetched. Without Day, there is a good chance Maurin would have been just another radical preaching his agenda in Union Square.90

Other problems were created by volunteers within the group who either disagreed with something that the Catholic Worker stood for, or they formed their own groups and wanted to somehow change the Catholic Worker. For example, John Cort created ACTU. Cort was a good volunteer and leader within the Catholic Worker and while Day supported unions, together she and Maurin did not believe that they were the ideal situation. They believed the way Cort was doing business was treating work too much as a struggle and a commodity, and not as a gift and part of the Christian society that the Catholic Worker wanted. 91

Another volunteer who created problems was John Cogley. He became upset with the Catholic Worker and more specifically Day when she sent out a letter to all the Hospitality

89 Piehl. *Breaking Bread*. 22
90 Ibid. 58-61
91 Ibid. 125, 128
Houses, stating that they would have to support the pacifist stance or they would be forced out of the Worker’s movement. Cogley was upset because this was not necessarily a Church principle and many in the Church supported the Spanish Civil War and World War II. This was the first instance that disagreement equaled exile; people’s disagreements within the movement in the past had never incited threats of their removal. This specific problem was created by both Day’s stubbornness in defending her ideas and Cogley making the problem have larger repercussions than it could have had if he had not brought so much attention to it. Because of the support of the pacifist movement and opposition to unions, many people and Hospitality Houses left the Catholic Worker Movement. At its highest there were 32 Houses of Hospitality, but by 1948 there were only 11.92

The final group of problems that the Catholic Worker encountered was institutional problems. Many arose simply from the lenient way in which the organization was run. There was a problem with the farming commune when they started it in 1936, for a variety of reasons. The primary reason was that not enough of them actually knew how to farm, so the pressure was put on those that could farm for everyone. In addition to the lack of farming knowledge, they also did not have any rule about turning people away. Thus, even when the year’s crops were successful, often times they had too many people living in the houses for all of them to be fed. Also, they never had sufficient land to operate a full farm that would make enough food for everyone to enjoy. Finally, they just did not have enough money to deal with any potential losses in a crop year, so when something went wrong they often times were unable to fix it.93

92 Day & Ellsberg, By Little and By Little. 228; Piehl, Breaking Bread, 155-156
93 Piehl. Breaking Bread, 129-131
Other problems that came up were involved with different types of volunteers. First, they
did not know what to do with married couples, whose relationships influenced the movement
because each person’s priority was his/her spouse. They eventually sent most of the married
couples to the farms during the farms’ existence. Also, since there were no requirements for
volunteers they had a very high turnover rate, which meant they constantly had to deal with new
people with new personalities. This turnover problem created difficulties in jobs that had to get
done a certain way or jobs that required training. Also, they sometimes experienced
overpopulation when more people would want to live there than they had room for. Instead of
kicking people out they forced everyone to be more uncomfortable so that all could be
accommodated.94

Though exterior problems were rare, there were a few that still affected the Catholic
Worker. Most of them came from people that were wary of Dorothy Day’s past and the
movement being communal because they feared it was a Communist organization. Many
Catholics feared it was a communist plot for them to infiltrate the Church hierarchy and agenda.
Alternatively, communists thought it was a Catholic way to try and steal the working class away
from the communists. The Catholic’s suspicion sometime went away when they would learn
about the movement and what they actually did. However, sometimes the people still did not
support the communalism and their eventual goal of a new society, within this society.95

94 Ibid. 129
95 Day & Ellsberg, By Little and By Little, XXX; Ibid. 187-188;
Chapter 4: Conclusion

Comparison

The Catholic Worker and the Jesuit Labor Schools were successful in their attentiveness to the needs of America during the Depression. When both groups saw the problems of poverty and workers being maltreated by their employers, they each worked according to their specific capabilities to alleviate the problems, while applying the Catholic social teaching principles available to them.

The two groups then responded to the problems of the Depression in the ways that were best for them. Day and the Catholic Worker knew that they excelled in their compassion for others and when they dealt with people face to face. Day also knew that her past history in journalism could help her broaden the exposure and publicize the need for help to the poor. The Catholic Worker and the Houses of Hospitality covered these two needs well and facilitated change through the group’s dedication to the movement. The Jesuits knew that they specialized in education and their most useful tool to alleviate the problems of the time lay in their ability to teach others about the labor laws and how the workers could best use the labor laws to fight for their rights. The Xavier Labor School was constructed to teach the local men about these different laws and what their best course of action would be within their unions. The Jesuits and the Catholic Worker both received their callings to aid the same problem in the community, however, each group’s different expertise led to very different actions to attain the same end.

The way these two groups responded to the issues in their distinct ways led to an accidental complementary relationship. They ended up being complementary in both temporal means, and in terms of human and occupational growth. The Catholic Worker was most
important and saw the most rapid growth of size from the year it began in 1933 until about 1941. Following this its importance to the community decreased gradually when the war began to take precedence in the news and minds of Americans, and Day’s pacifism made the group look more radical than it was. Still they dealt with the homeless and people’s immediate needs. The Jesuit Labor Schools started in 1936, however, did not become relevant until after World War II with the arrival of Fr. John Corridan. Their importance lasted until 1953 when the New York State Crime Commission closed and many of the criminals on the waterfront had either been thrown in jail or been kicked off the waterfront. Their ministry was for people who had just received jobs, or had jobs that required little skill and who were taken advantage of by their employers. These were people who would have been unemployed or homeless in the 1930s and dealt with the Catholic Worker, and now had a low level job that could be taken advantage of by their employer and needed help with labor laws so they went to the Jesuits.

Both groups were located in New York and their headquarters were only a few blocks away from each other. Since they were both in New York they each dealt with the same church officials and probably helped out many of the same people. For example, some of the longshoremen that lacked regular work would have had financial troubles and it is likely they could have looked for assistance from the Catholic Worker. The two groups also dealt with Cardinal Spellman; an interesting note that two of the most liberal social movements in the American Church happened under one of the more outspokenly conservative bishops. It is also worthy of note that Spellman did not try to shut either group down, that both groups recognized him as a ‘successor of Peter’ and that he had authority over them and over the Church in New York.
Family was another important issue for both of the groups. They both believed family was important in supporting loved ones through difficult times. Since the majority of people had economic issues, it was a common question how one could support their families without a steady flow of income. This generated great stress in families, and the groups worried it would particularly influence the men to do something dangerous or criminal, such as join the mafia. Also, both groups dealt with people suffering greatly from learned self-hatred: low self worth, feelings that society did not need them, feelings they were unimportant, feelings they were inferior. The Jesuits and the Catholic Worker both worked tirelessly to deal with these real issues in a few ways. First, they extended open ears. Second, they counseled the men with hopes of sharing the knowledge that even though they worked in low skill jobs or were unemployed, they were important and deserved to be treated with equal dignity.

The two groups were both influenced by European Catholics, specifically the French. Since the Europeans experienced urbanization before Americans, they also experienced the troubles accompanying industrialized labor before Americans. This enabled the groups to learn from their experiences. More direct French influences include Maurin’s French lineage and the fact that the Jesuits had a large number of French members in the order. The French were just ahead in what they saw and how they responded, which left the Americans to respond shortly after.

Both movements exemplified the pillars of the time’s Catholic social teaching by putting into practice and action much of what *Rerum Novarum, Quadragesimo Anno*, and Msgr. Ryan had established as the ideal for Catholic social action.
The Catholic Worker was influenced in many ways by *Rerum Novarum*. First, as a demand from *Rerum Novarum*, they acted upon the promotion of dignity and rights of workers. The Catholic Worker believed that workers should not be mistreated by employers and that they needed to be protected from any dangerous activity that could happen at their jobs.  

Secondly, Peter Maurin’s view of society was based on the common good, which was as St. Thomas Aquinas said, “the part and the whole are in a certain sense identical that which belongs to the whole in a sense belongs to the part.” He believed the poor depend on the rich, just as much as the rich depend on the poor; that both of them are parts to the whole society. The best course of action then for both groups would be to work together and achieve the common good for all.  

Lastly, the Catholic Worker took their preferential treatment for the poor from *Rerum Novarum*. The Catholic Worker believed that “the true worth and nobility of man lie in his moral qualities, that is, in virtue; that virtue is, moreover, the common inheritance of men” and “He (Jesus) displays the tenderest charity toward the lowly and the oppressed.” This was at the heart of the Catholic Worker, the belief that every person is worthy of dignity and respect and just because someone is poor does not mean they are any less important or virtuous than someone who is rich. The final quote embodies the way Day acted, that she displayed charity towards all the lowly and oppressed, because she believed when she was helping them she was helping Jesus in them.

Through the next encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, the Catholic Worker adopted their belief that manufacturers, employers, and employees should all work together for the best of everyone. The Catholic Worker believed it was the duty of each of these groups to perform their tasks to the best of their ability. This meant the manufacturer sold their product at a just price to

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97 Ibid. 27

98 Ibid. 24
the employer and the employer gave a just salary to their employees.\textsuperscript{99} The Catholic Worker also picked up their view on labor in general that “labor is not a mere commodity. On the contrary, the worker’s human dignity in it must be recognized.”\textsuperscript{100} This idea was very close to Day and was the central point in her struggle against labor unions. Day believed fully that the workers dignity should be shown through their occupation and that too many people treated work as something that had to be done and as a commodity. Finally, Maurin adopted his view of the social order from the encyclical, the idea of collective group discussions and decisions. This was his model for his roundtable discussions where both rich and poor alike could come together and discuss how they could both best serve each other’s needs. He also proposed a recreation of the social order, so that in a new society the two could be more closely conjoined.

The Jesuits were influenced by many of the same themes from \textit{Rerum Novarum}, however, they also had picked up additional themes from the encyclical . A principle that the Xavier School valued was that “capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. Mutual agreement results in the beauty of good order, while perpetual conflict necessarily produces confusion and savage barbarity.”\textsuperscript{101} The Jesuits put this principle into action throughout their ministry, and they tried to make the capital understand that it was necessary for them to come to agreement for the good of both groups. The Jesuits, and specifically Corridan, believed that “There are occasions, doubtless, when it is fitting that the law should intervene to prevent certain associations, as when men join together for purposes which are evidently bad, unlawful, or dangerous to the State.”\textsuperscript{102} This normally meant the State could intervene if they believed an association had communist tendencies. Yet, Corridan wanted to use this concept to

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{99} “Pius XI. Quadragesimo Anno. Encyclical letter on Reconstruction of the Social Order.” May 15, 1931. 72
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid. 83
\textsuperscript{101} “Leo XIII. Rerum Novarum. Encyclical letter on the Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour.” May 15, 1891 19
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid. 52
\end{footnotesize}
attain State intervention on the ILA because their policies were bad for the workers and it was involved in criminal activity with the mafia. The Jesuits also believed “if through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accept harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice.” The labor schools tried to address this directly because they believed the men were victims of injustice when their employers would not give them a fair wage and they were subject to dangerous conditions. The labor school believed that labor unions were a good thing and they could help “afford opportune aid to those who are in distress.” This was the basis the Xavier school was founded upon, that labor unions could help those workers who had been mistreated, and show those men their true dignity and worth.103

Since the Jesuits had a hand in writing Quadragesimo Anno much of what it said they in fact believed, performed and incorporated in their works and activities. One of the primary points of the encyclical was its reaffirmation to the commitment condemning both communism and socialism. It also detailed how the Church believed communism came about: that when workers are maltreated for an extended period of time they grow together and unite against the employers. In doing so, they turn away from God and look to communism as the solution. The Jesuits saw the problems in America and feared that conditions could be ripe for the communists to take over, so the labor schools’ goal was to directly combat the spread of communism. Lastly, the Jesuits end goal throughout their work at the labor school was “that the conflict between the hostile classes be abolished and harmonious cooperation … be encouraged and promoted.”104

103 Ibid. 48
104 Ibid. 81
Both the Jesuits and Day were influenced by the writings of Msgr. John Ryan, who at the time was the most prominent American Catholic writer on social activism. Ryan’s writings combined the Church’s view from *Rerum Novarum* with the American capitalist spirit of the modern age. He infused the Church’s view of natural law with the current capitalistic economic system, in which he took much of his thinking from *Rerum Novarum*. The Jesuits and Day then took what Ryan had already thought and put it into practice. For the Jesuits they took hold that the social question had to deal with both economics and morality.\textsuperscript{105} This can be seen with them concentrating and serving the whole person when working with the men, meaning they worked with their labor problems of course, but also their spirituality, work environment, and their family life. Also, Ryan believed the state would need to have some sort of regulation in businesses in order to protect workers from the type of people that were on the waterfront. This principle can also be seen in Corridan trying to get state involvement to fight with him against the ILA, and why he supported the AFL-ILA over the old ILA in the waterfront elections.

**Differences**

The two groups were also very different in many ways. The most significant difference was the Jesuits were a well established religious order, while the Catholic Worker was for the most part an authoritarian movement led by Dorothy Day with no concrete premeditated plan.

The Catholic Worker was started with some planning between Day and Maurin, however, from the start it was clear that Day was in charge of the organization of the movement. Maurin crafted the ideas but Day was in charge of their execution. This was evident from the start when the first paper was delayed for seven months because Maurin did not have any source of income.

\textsuperscript{105} Schultze, *Strangers in a Foreign Land*, 70
and the obligation fell on Day to sort out the details. Next, the Hospitality Houses were started when Maurin told a few vagrants that Day would not turn them away, and it was then Day’s job to give them a place to stay. These two examples show how the Catholic Worker did not have a set plan of action. They could look at Maurin’s ‘Easy Essay’ on what he wanted the Catholic Worker to look like, but that was just a framework and did not give any direction. Day also left much up to chance, both financially and in action, nevertheless, things always seemed to work out. It is possible that Day actually had a plan that she made for the Catholic Worker, but she did not show it because she wanted to make it look like the whole movement was relying on God constantly in all areas. It seems out of line with her character that she would have been so disorganized at times, especially as her relationship with Maurin grew, she would have had to understand that he would continue to blurt out ideas and not have a plan as to how to make them work.

The Catholic Worker was run solely by volunteers, another difference between them and the Jesuits, who had no volunteers. The volunteers came to The Worker with no level of commitment and many of them came with no work experience. The volunteers stayed for varied sets of time, so it was difficult for The Worker to get many programs going because they would constantly be working with new people. Most of the volunteers did not have any theological training and were only volunteering because they thought it was the right thing to do.

The largest difference between the two groups is in the form of leadership. For the Catholic Worker it was Dorothy Day; what she said went. This can most obviously be seen in her pacifist stance and her interactions with John Cogley on this stance, but it could also be seen within the movement on many smaller day-to-day issues. For example, during the farming commune some of the people on the farm wanted there to be a limit on the amount of people
allowed to live there so they would have enough food at all times. Day came in and refused this proposal, affirming it must be open to anyone and everyone. This power painted Day as a figure who was larger than life and she became as large if not larger than the movement itself, being in charge of everything.

The Jesuits, on the other hand, were very well organized and were very militaristic both in formation and in organization since the founding of their order with Ignatius of Loyola. Because of this they had a name and a reputation to live up to, as the ones who are supposed to fight the Pope’s spiritual battles and be extremely well educated, giving strict obedience to their superiors within the order and with the Pope. This reputation gave them an advantage when dealing with people, because their educational expertise was widely known. So when they were spoke on theological issues their voice was respected more than others.

The Jesuits had a solid base of support within their order that they could count on. They did not have to worry about not having enough personnel to be able to complete their ministry because they knew that if they needed some more manpower the order would give them one or two more people. They also did not have to worry about on the job training because all of the men had gone through formation.

Finally, the Jesuits had the backing of an entire religious order in their ministry. They had the benefit of being able to look back at past Jesuit ministries and saw which ones worked and which ones did not, so they could improve their current ministry so it would not fail. This ability also gave them the knowledge to see how their ministries would pan out which helped with planning. All of the Jesuits were able to come together and plan how they best thought they could address and combat the social problems at the time.
One of the largest differences between the two groups is in the capacity that they approached the workers. The Jesuits were going to the people in their capacity as priests, meaning they were going “in persona Christi,” or as the person of Christ. When they went to mentor people and teach the workers they believed they were bringing Christ to the workers and were showing them Christ’s love. Alternatively, Day believed that by helping out the men and the workers she was helping out Christ and that it was her duty wherein her salvation depended on her fulfilling the works of mercy and helping Christ in these men.

Impact

These two movements are both important to American Catholic social justice and social teaching because they are some of the earliest movements in America and each succeeded in implementing Church social teaching in their situations. It is difficult to say which group had a greater impact on Catholic social action and thought. Both groups had varying impacts over time since their inception. The Jesuits had a greater short-term impact, while the Catholic Worker had a greater long-term impact.

The central reason for the Jesuits’ strong short-term impact was their organizational advantage as an order because they had both the resources to adequately plan and put that plan into action.

The Xavier Labor School had above average attendance in their classes and retreats. They created a solid groundwork for future Catholic labor teachers in areas that workers needed instruction and how to teach the workers. It was successful because it was one of the first labor schools of its kind and continued for over forty years.
The more publicized effort that came from the Jesuits was the work of Fr. Corridan. His success was relatively short lived since he was at Xavier from 1946-1953. Upon his arrival to Xavier, Corridan quickly began his work and started to create change and try to clean up the waterfront. Over the next few years he helped to put away criminals, helped to give longshoremen basic rights and insurances, helped to get Joe Ryan kicked out of his office, and brought in state intervention to the problem. Corridan exemplified the gospel message and did a good job bringing Christ’s presence to the waterfront. Corridan also publicized the workers plight by working with Malcolm Johnson on his series of articles *Crime On the Waterfront*. These articles helped to open the eyes of many politicians and authorities to the problems on the waterfront and the need of state intervention on the waterfront. Finally, Elia Kazan got a hold of the series and decided to direct the movie *On the Waterfront*, which greater publicized the message. Corridan’s work was significant because he made a large impact in a short period of time. After his departure though, Xavier lost much of its significance. Although it remained open it did not garner much attention until its closure in 1989.

The Catholic Worker began with an immense amount of support from the Catholic community because they were responding to a problem that was evident for all of America to see and it caught the attention of many people. The Catholic Worker began to lose some of its popularity as the 1930s closed with the Spanish Civil War, the beginning of World War II and the economy getting better. However, The Worker’s impact rose again in the 1960s as the Vietnam War began and the pacifist stance became more popular. This impact diminished after the war, however, The Worker has remained relevant still to this day. The Worker has had a tremendous impact on Catholic social teaching and the Catholic left with *The Catholic Worker* publishing works written by people such as Thomas Merton and the Berrigan brothers; to people
such as Michael Harrington, an influential man to Kennedy’s War on Poverty; John Cort, and John Cogley, who lived and were educated in Hospitality Houses; and Fr. Owen Rice was very important within the Pittsburgh House.

The Catholic Worker had a greater long term impact in large part to Dorothy Day. Her charisma and the idol she has become have managed to keep people subscribing to *The Catholic Worker* and desiring to volunteer at a Hospitality House. While Day has died her spirit and her presence remain in the houses.
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