

# PEACE PILGRIMS FIND COMMON PEOPLE DON'T FAVOR WAR'S MADNESS

Dorothy Day

*New York Call* Monday, April 2, 1917, page 1, above the fold

Philadelphia, April 1 – War is not wanted by the people of the United States. The Emergency Peace federation has proved this by its pilgrimage to Washington. The minority of the people in the towns of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania are firmly convinced that they do not want war. The majority do not quite know why the nations of Europe are fighting or why the United States should butt in except for a vague and ephemeral idea of national honor. All through the small towns visited, this majority was ready to be told the platform of the Emergency Peace federation and the principles of fraternity.

We left Union Square at 2 o'clock Saturday afternoon and sweltered through Jersey City, with a hot wind in our faces. We slowly paraded along the main streets of Newark, looking for a place to stop. The trouble was that, wherever we went, a crowd of autos and wagons and pedestrians followed and cluttered up the street, so the policemen waved us along. When we found a stopping place, and everybody had hopped out and had begun orating and distributing literature and taking up a collection and answering questions a policeman rode up on a militaristic horse and yelled: "No street meetings!"

## ***Public Forced Them to Move***

The people wanted to stay. They were reluctant to leave the sidewalk – so reluctant that he had to edge his horse nearer and nearer, and up onto the sidewalk, just as the police did in New York during the food riots. They were gentle, it is true, and quite coldly polite. But we had to move.

They couldn't make us stop speaking, though, and the chauffeur of the Chinatown sightseeing bus, being a pacifist himself, was quite willing to meander along through the crowds, so the boys could hand out literature.

One small boy threw a beer bottle, it is true, which broke before the truck – and several dogs barked at us belligerently, but the mass of people who cluttered the streets, doing their Saturday afternoon shopping listened to everything that we had to say.

And then on to Elizabeth as fast as we could spin. Here, too, the audience, even several guardsmen and policemen, listened. And then having regaled ourselves with peanuts and pimento sandwiches, and having picked up the scattered pacifists who insisted on wandering into soda stores, we whirled out along the country road.

For a long while a policeman on a motorcycle followed us. We were reasonably certain that he was not following our example and journeying to Washington to fight for peace, so we slowed down. It would have been a horrible thing, for forty pilgrims to be hauled to a country jail for speeding, and there to spend the night.

### ***Duck the Motor Cop***

However, no such cruel fate was awaiting us. We ducked down a side road and eluded the policemen and spun along, scattering peanut shells.

We thought we were lost for sure for a while, and would have to follow back along the peanut trail. But after switching around in several directions we finally found the right road, and landed in New Brunswick.

There were some signs of opposition there. The people insisted on asking argumentative and quarrelsome questions. All were answered, however, and nobody threw anything at us.

There was some trouble with the woman in the telegraph office, too. I wanted to telegraph to my anxious editor that the expedition had not as yet fallen off a cliff or sumthin' and that militarists were becoming pacific. But the girl with the wad of gum looked at the telegram and said:

“Who’re you? An’ w’at’s the peace crusade? I don’t know nothin’ about youse. Pay in advance; can’t send it collect.”

### ***Won by Special Edition***

It took ten valuable minutes to convert her to the cause of pacifism. However, we parted amicably, she gazing soulfully at a copy of the anti-war edition of *The Call* which had been handed to her.

“Some picture, huh?” she said to her companion behind the counter, as she studied Ryan Walker’s great cartoon.

After New Brunswick, where the college fellows were the only ones that jeered at us, we rode some more. Did you know that sightseeing buses are really very comfortable? They are. We had to get out and stretch only once, on the way to Trenton. We stretched in a country store where there were wonderful home-made apple pies and cookies and lollypops. The lollypops and the pie were great, only the dust of the country road would insist upon silvering our lollypops.

Then Trenton, where the chief of police would not give us a permit to speak from the bus. There was a wonderful, flourishing military review going on, and all the 90,000 inhabitants of Trenton were lined up along the pavements. We reached them with copies of the *Dawn* and *The Call*, and leaflets and pamphlets.

Philadelphia, at present, is looking upon us with supercilious glances. But perhaps it is because it is Sunday and because immense patriotic meetings are being held. But even though the lady in the limousine sniffs when we offer her literature, “I’m not a pro-German,” and even though the stout gentleman with the heavy gold chain informs us when we ask him to contribute to the fund to fight for peace, that he is an American - still we don’t despair.

All the small boys cheer us in the fields. The farmer drops his hoe and waves hat and hands wildly. Even the chickens in the road scurry out of the way for us. A whole crowd of boy scouts on bicycles yelled “Hurrah!” joyfully until we were away out of sight.

America doesn’t want war and the forty pilgrims are making her realize it.