

On Pilgrimage - June 1968

Dorothy Day

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Summary: A series of diary-like entries describing protests in New York regarding peace, race, and the closing of Sydenham Hospital. Interspersed are events of friends, including the confirmation of Peggy Baird and a wedding at the farm. Reports on plans for the summer, including a speaking engagement at the Pax conference and attendance at the Poor People's Campaign protests in Washington, DC. (DDLW #865).

One use of these columns is to give news of all the members of the Catholic Worker family to all the readers who have been closely associated with us over the years. I will begin with April 27, the day the last issue of the **CW** was delivered to the St. Joseph's House at 175 Chrystie Street to be mailed out. On that Saturday afternoon there were three parades. One was the Loyalty Day parade, another a Peace parade of many organizations which came down Fifth Avenue from east and west sides of Central Park and converged on the Sheep Meadow; the third was a protestors parade which began at Washington Square and without permit attempted a march, which was stopped by the police. One would not have expected our new Archbishop to walk, or head this third parade, but how nice it would have been, if he had joined what one might call ecumenically "his flock" in the Sheep Meadow! Past popes have spoken of the fallacy of an armed peace so we would not have had him march in a Preparedness Day parade. But since this was a Loyalty Day parade, he could have rightly appeared at both. Enrico Malatesta, the famous Italian anarchist, used to urge his friends and followers to rightly love their country, and in their loyalty do all they could to work for freedom and justice there, as well as in the entire world.

Arthur Sheehan, one of our editors, walked in the peace parade and suffered a heart attack the next morning. He had been helping us in the new house, coming each morning at eight o'clock to wait for inspectors and workers, and leaving at noon when someone else came to spell him. I visited him at Jacobi Hospital, which is new and spacious, and was delighted to find him recovering. He is now resting at his home on City Island where he can be written to: Box 25 City Island N.Y. 10464. Arthur has always lived in voluntary poverty, so if anyone wants to send a gift, let it be in cash, to pay rent for some of those little delicacies needed by the sick. (St. Francis called for some sweet cakes in his last illness.)

Sunday, April 28th

Attilio Cantori and his wife and child came for the day and we had a delightful concert of flute, guitar and banjo, and singing too. Joe and Audrey Monroe had their guitars, so it was a delightful day. Deane Mowrer taped an interview with Joe, who has been a leader in the black protest in Harlem against Columbia's getting part of Morningside Park for their new gymnasium and depriving the local people of much needed park space. The student rebellion made this protest part of their demonstrations and sit-ins which went on through the month. Black students occupied Hamilton Hall and the Harlem group brought hot meals to them, adding the peaceful works of mercy to the sometimes violent struggle which was going on.

Joe is also demonstrating and speaking at meetings opposing the closing of Sydenham Hospital, which is so much needed in Harlem. Shutting off of Medicaid and the closing of the smaller hospitals is inflicting great hardship on the poorest.

Let us hope that in future issues we will report more of the students' revolts. We have too few writers among our editors and co-workers. It is not only injustice to the blacks, corruption in the city, but cooperation with government research for war, and relations with administration that are being discussed in many other colleges and universities too. A happy note was struck when it was announced that classes one bright day would be held on the lawn and under the trees with cooperating faculty, and workers, employees and neighbors were all invited.

May 5th and 6th.

Went to see the movie, **War and Peace**, with William Oleksak, who has helped me by clipping Washington, Detroit and New York papers for many years, keeping track of affairs in Latin America, the peace movement and among the agricultural workers. The most beautiful scene in the picture is Prince Andre's drive through the woods, when he sees the old oak tree, seemingly dead, when all the young trees around him were covered with spring growth. The tree reflects his melancholy. Then after his overhearing Natasha's springtime, midnight soliloquy from her balcony, he leaves next day and retracing his journey finds the old tree bursting into fresh leaf. Helene Iswolsky, our Russian scholar in residence at Tivoli and I both liked those beautiful rural scenes and were exhausted by the hours of battle, Austerlitz on Sunday and Borodino on Monday, the spectacle of tens of thousands of French and Russian soldiers mowed down in that brutal invasion, an invasion duplicated in this century also, and a slaughter which brought home to us what was going on at that very moment in Vietnam.

Undoubtedly the picture will make us go back to reread Tolstoi's masterpiece.

May 12. Sunday.

Happy news. Peggy Baird (to use her maiden name) is taking instruction from Fr. Charles to be received into the Catholic Church. She was baptized a Presbyterian as a baby. On hearing the news, Malcolm Cowley, a former husband, came to see her, "clothed and in her right mind" as my mother used to say, surrounded

by her kittens and flowers and books, and studying the Baltimore catechism, of all things! I heard that WBAI in a recent auction to raise funds for a new headquarters was given a Baltimore catechism to auction off as an antique. Myself, I am reading the Dutch catechism with much joy, beginning with the chapter on the resurrection and Pentecost.

May 13-May 19

A delightful visit to Perkinsville, what with Eric, 19, home for ten days from Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Delightful in that it is spring, good weather, the children all well and healthy and playing out all day, and sorrowful in that Eric is in the army, right now transferred to Fort Benning, where he will be until November. Then a last leave, and then shipping out. Where, God knows. At Tivoli, Mr. Moore's son was sent to Ethiopia. Mrs. de Ruyter's grandson has spent his entire time at Fort Knox and will be out of the service in September.

Tamar and I picked dandelion greens and rhubarb and walked in the garden, and we had milk from a neighbor's goats and maple syrup from Hilaire's labor in the spring, and I rested and was relaxed although the house was bulging just as Tivoli always is, with young of all ages. One woke up to find them sleeping on the dining room floor too.

May 20.

A wedding at the farm, Will Gilbert and Laura, witnessed by Fr. Rogers, Episcopalian minister up the hill. Cake was baked by Joan Welch and music was supplied by three youths, two of them from Bard college, I understand, who were so covered with hair as to head and face that only a little circle of face appeared, and very bright eyes. They played recorder, drum, banjo and guitar, and at first they looked like the Huns of the old sagas who descended like wolves on the fold, but their music was gentle and so were they, and before they left I had come to think of them as more like the followers of St. Francis than of Alaric. Who knows, St. Francis might have been just as hairy, shabby in his shepherd's tunic and bare feet. Marge Hughes let fall the word Hobbit, and one of the youths turned out to be an enthusiastic reader of the Tolkien books. (Tolkien, by the way, is listed as one of the translators of the Jerusalem Bible.)

June first.

Peggy Baird received into the Church by Fr. Hickey, Redemptorist from Esopus, across the river, Fr. Charles being absent at a retreat house. Visitors poured in this weekend, Malcolm, Muriel, Sue Brown, Betsy-Lou and Justine Murphy from Detroit (Deane taped an interview with them) and all the others that I am sure Deane has listed.

And now I sit each day in the new house, in New York, and there are so many visitors who wish to see it that I am not catching up with my correspondence yet. And there is no time to write more about resistance and non-resistance about which I am going to speak at the Pax conference this summer. Let us hope that in the next issue I shall report that we are moving into the new house and

settled down to a more disciplined life of work. We are working, Peter Maurin used to say, “for that kind of a society where it is easier for people to be good.”

We are hoping to go on the June 19th demonstration with all the other peace groups to Washington, to show our support for the Poor People’s Campaign. Jack Cook meant to go to Washington to write about Resurrection City, but the condition of our own destitute kept him at home. Maybe when the flood of summer volunteers come, we can help more.