

Walking for Peace

Some Hospitality, Suspicion Greet Woman in Winona

By DICK CAIN
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A grey-haired woman, 50 or more years young, wearing blue slacks and a navy blue tunic bearing the words "Peace Pilgrim," came Wednesday to Winona, a stranger to this city, without a penny in her pockets but with a message of love in her heart.

She delivered her message — once at a joint meeting of the city's four service clubs as an unscheduled substitute for Gov. Elmer L. Andersen and also over the radio and to small groups and individuals on street corners.

HOW DID Winonans react to her message?

● Well, many expressed admiration for her speaking ability and dedication to her mission.

● One man slipped 50 cents in her tunic pocket, unknown to her at the time.

● She was provided food and shelter.

● A police detective questioned her.

● The police department, in another query, asked if she were connected with the carnival coming here for the American Legion convention and if she were a "bona fide character."

● And, it was suggested by one person that, because she spoke of peace, she is an agent of the Kremlin.

Who is this woman who invaded Winona, in her "strange" blue suit? What was she doing here? And what was her message?

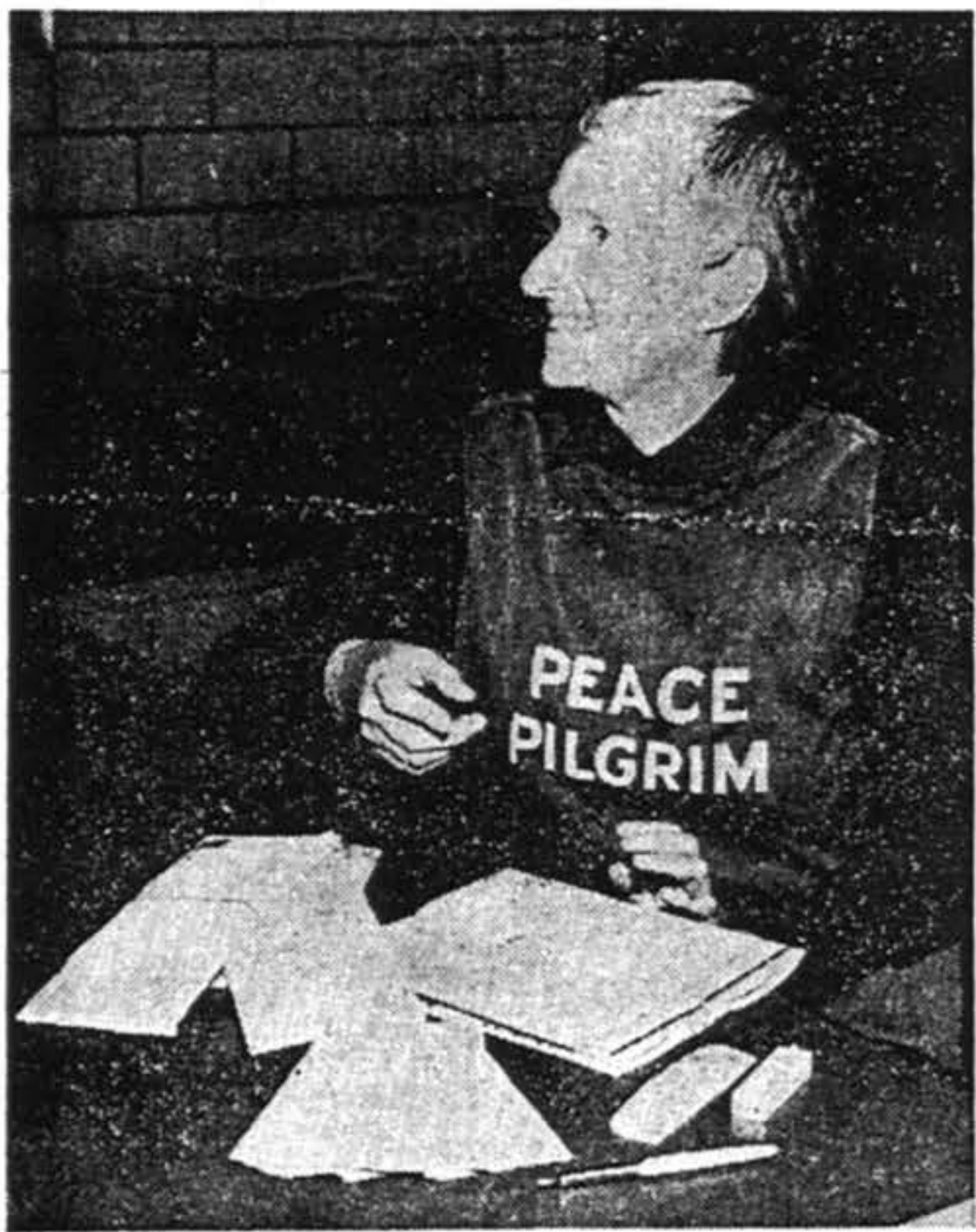
As it says on her tunic, she is Peace Pilgrim and she is walking 25,000 miles for world peace. Winona was one stop on that journey which has taken her, in eight years, about 18,000 miles through 48 states of the United States, parts of Mexico, all 10 provinces of Canada and 23 pair of crepe-soled shoes.

OF HER NAME she says, "I feel Peace Pilgrim is my real name though it is not my old name," adding that she wants to stress the mission and not the individual. She doesn't give any address as her home, but she does receive mail at Cologne, N. J. Peace says she's affiliated with no organization, religious or otherwise. "This is an individual undertaking; it's just me."

As it states on her printed message, her mission is to "walk as a prayer and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work for peace." And her vow? "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food."

She believes that this is a crisis period, unparalleled in human history, in which men must choose between a nuclear war of annihilation and a "golden age of peace."

Peace says all persons are faced with this decision, even if they do nothing at all, for this will permit strong forces to push the world into chaos.



ONLY POSSESSIONS . . . Peace Pilgrim shows her only worldly possessions, which she carries in a pocket around the bottom of her tunic. They are a ballpoint pen, a traveler's toothbrush, copies of her message, unanswered mail and a map of Minnesota. (Daily News photo)

SHE SPREADS her message by the news media, by speeches to any groups that will invite her and by a newsletter which may be obtained by writing her at Cologne where a "helper" sees that the letter is printed.

She says she doesn't attempt to force her ideas on anyone. "I can discuss the spiritual laws with my fellow human beings but I cannot tell them how they should act. This motivation should come from within them. I can only try to inspire them toward right action."

Believing it is wrong to harm life, either physically or psychologically, she absolutely opposes war under any circumstances. And as this reporter discovered when she ate at his home, she extends this belief to include all animal life. She doesn't eat meat and, to be consistent, never wears shoes made of leather.

CONTENDING that a vegetarian diet is healthier, she ribbed this reporter's family for its poor meat diet.

The only material possessions she has are a comb, a traveler's toothbrush, a ballpoint pen, copies of her message, some unanswered mail and, at the present time, a map of Minnesota. Peace says "unnecessary possessions are unnecessary burdens."

She found about 23 years ago that accumulation of material objects was not meaningful and dedicated herself to service of her fellow men. This has proved meaningful to her. After finding inner peace, about 15 years ago, she says she "felt guided or called to begin my pilgrimage for peace in the world."

"**AFTER YOU** have found inner peace," she adds, "energy is as endless as air, you never run out of it."

Peace was delighted at her opportunity to speak at the meeting of the Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions and Exchange clubs. When it was discovered that the governor didn't come because of poor weather, her speaking engagement was arranged. Many of the service club members asked her questions afterwards and congratulated her for an inspiring speech.

It was at this time that a man slipped up behind her and dropped two quarters in her tunic pocket. Later, when she discovered them she said she would use it for postage. "It's hard to remain penniless," she says.

AFTER HER speech she spoke over the radio and later, at the library, a detective questioned her. He asked her who she was and what she was doing here.

The person who criticized her speech reasoned that the Kremlin promotes phony peace programs and because this woman spoke of peace — and spoke very well — she was an agent of the Kremlin.

He added that she may not be an active agent of the Communist conspiracy, but by doing what she was doing she was unwittingly aiding the evil designs of the Kremlin.

Peace left this morning for the Twin Cities. She will be walking to St. Cloud and Duluth to spread her message, clicking off more miles on her pilgrimage of 25,000 miles.

But she says, "My goal is not any certain number of miles, my goal is peace."