CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR YEARS AND AFTER

Was not war in the interest of democracy for the salvation of civilization a contradiction in terms, whoever said it or however often it was repeated?

JANE ADDAMS, 1922

Jane Addams’ attempts to help stop the war through the formation of a neutral mediation commission met no success. But neither the events of these years nor Wilsonian rhetoric persuaded her that American participation was necessary or desirable. In April, 1917, as in August, 1914, she believed that fighting could never resolve international disputes and that war destroyed the only bases—reason and good will—that could solve such controversies. Miss Addams did not make American entrance into the war an opportunity to suspend or reverse her commitment to democracy and culture. Although these were years of deep discouragement for her, she remained faithful to the full democratic and humane ideals that undergirded so much reform effort before 1914.1

Jane Addams was a lonely figure in these war years. Most of the other prewar Progressives supported the war. John Dewey, for instance, embraced war because there seemed to be no alternative. In January, 1917, Dewey wrote that America should not enter the war “until the Allies are fighting on our terms for our democracy and civilization.” In the next months he became convinced that the war was unavoidable. By July he urged pacifists, among whom he had recently counted himself, to stop opposing the war and to use “their energies to form at a plastic juncture, the conditions and objects” which would make the distasteful

1. Jane Addams wrote to Mrs. Robert Morss Lovett that just recalling the war years in writing about them in Second Twenty Years at Hull-House made her “shrink inside me as an Irishman would say.” Jane Addams to Ida Lovett, February 25, 1930, SCPC.

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job worthwhile.²

This enlistment of humanitarians in the war did not go unchallenged. Randolph Bourne attacked Dewey by asking how pragmatic philosophers who found war too strong to prevent could imagine it weak enough to control and mold. Pragmatists who embraced war to further democratic ends had failed to realize, Bourne wrote, that war was as near an absolute coercive situation as it was possible to fall into; once accepted, war eliminated further choices. "The penalty the realist pays for accepting war is to see disappear one by one the justifications for accepting it." In addition, Bourne pointed to the vagueness of the war goals and war programs by which Dewey justified the war. Dewey and his disciples, Bourne said, had mastered the methods of organizing, ordering, and administering; but these techniques failed in any way to touch "the happiness of the individual, the vivifying of the personality, the comprehension of social forces, the flair of art—in other words, the quality of life." Bourne's ideals were as vague as Dewey's, but he bluntly described the poverty of pragmatism as a technique for framing social ideals and values, especially when pragmatists could imagine that war would advance peaceful cultural and democratic goals.³

Jane Addams had consistently concerned herself with the discovery and definition of social values and ideals. The development of methods and professional techniques had been of minor interest to her, and the administrative appeal that tempted many pragmatists to embrace the war failed to sway her. She wrote Randolph Bourne to praise the "masterly way" he had replied to the prowar liberals.⁴ She remained convinced that war destroyed the social values of democracy and civilization. To believe that war provided a pragmatic instrumentality to strengthen these values was to believe a contradiction which was untrue.

In the spring of 1917 Jane Addams spoke several times on "Patriotism and Pacifists in Wartime." She insisted that rational discussion of peace terms and postwar arrangements were all the

² Cited in Morton White, Social Thought In America, pp. 166, 168. See also Forcey, Crossroads of Liberalism, especially pp. 247 ff. for the shift toward war of the editors of the New Republic. Alice Hamilton wrote Jane Addams, June 13, 1917, SCPC, "I dined with the Croly's. . . . [They were] all what I should call pacifistically minded but under the obsession of the fatality of this war."

³ Bourne, Untimely Papers, pp. 99, 135.

⁴ Jane Addams to Randolph Bourne, June 30, 1917, Bourne Papers, Columbia University Library.
more pressing since America had declared war. Pacifists could no longer carry on their antiwar propaganda but surely Americans should be able to discuss "aspects of patriotism" which were as relevant in wartime as in time of peace. Miss Addams replied to charges that pacifists were cowards and slackers. Many pacifists, she said, individually and collectively "have long striven for social and political justice with a fervor perhaps equal to that employed by the advocates of force. . . ." And if the aim of the war was justice, as war's advocates insisted, then the experience of those who had worked for it before the war was relevant. War exhibited "some of the noblest qualities of the human spirit," Miss Addams admitted, but war was unable to solve international problems. War inevitably aroused the most barbaric antagonisms, and the spirit of fighting burned away all those impulses that fostered the will to justice. Men who maintained that war advanced justice were, Jane Addams said simply, wrong.\(^5\)

These remarks provoked a strong public reaction. Chicago was a center of wartime hysteria and opposition to pacifism and pressures toward a monolithic, unitary patriotism were very strong there. With its large immigrant population and its wide extremes of class and living standards, the city was shaken by spasms of fear in 1917. Jane Addams explained this fearfulness by referring to the alleged "anarchist riots" of Chicago's history which had "left their traces upon the nervous system of the city somewhat as a nervous shock experienced in youth will long afterwards determine the action of a mature man under widely different circumstances." Another Chicagoan, Edgar Lee Masters, recalled that life in the city became a "purgatory."

Like the other American cities, Chicago went through an orgy of hate and hypocrisy, of cruelty and revenge. . . . Nothing like it had ever been seen before. . . . People died from nervous exhaustion and fear; and insanity of a definite character took the minds of nearly everyone. Scarcely a human being in the city was left untouched by mania, unless it was the magnates who profited by this slaughter in Europe; and, as to them, they suffered an accession of greed which might be called insanity.\(^6\)

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The American Protective League was founded in Chicago and reflected this atmosphere of hysteria. In his authorized history, Emerson Hough explained that the founding of the league was like the response of an "astounded and anguished America" to a cry for help from God Himself. Hough explained how the league had to deal with Chicago's "Bolsheviki, socialists, incendiaries, I.W.W.'s, Lutheran treason-talkers, Russellites, Bergerites, all the other -ites, religious and social fanatics, third-sex agitators, long-haired visionaries and work haters from every race in the world. . . ." The league's major activity was filling reports on suspected traitors and slackers. Hough dignified this snooping by quoting Division Superintendent Clabough of the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Investigation, who estimated that "the Chicago Division of the American Protective League did seventy-five percent of the Government investigating work during the war." 7

The wartime Berger and I.W.W. trials took place in Chicago, and in the summer of 1919 the city was disgraced by terrible race riots. Chicago's foreign population seemed a special menace to American ideals for many patriots. The U.S. Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, in planning his dragnet raid for the first of January, 1920, was disconcerted to discover that state agents in Illinois had already planned a round-up of foreign radicals for that day. Consequently, in Chicago there were two "Palmer raids": the first conducted by state agents on New Year's Day, and the second by federal agents the following day. 8

This kind of hysteria was the background for the rapid changes in public opinion which effectively isolated the advocates of peace once America entered the war. Miss Addams recalled that "early

7. Emerson Hough, The Web, the Authorized History of the American Protective League (Chicago, 1919), pp. 28, 180, 491. See also ibid., p. 197: "On November 23, Fred I——— said to resemble the Crown Prince very much in his personal appearance, was fined five thousand dollars, whether for seditious utterances or for his resemblance to the Crown Prince does not appear, and is immaterial. Either would be enough. On November 26, nine men were given free transportation from Chicago to Fort Leavenworth. One of these was a Dunkard preacher who got ten years for saying, 'I'd kill a man rather than buy a Liberty bond.’ He will have time to think that proposition over. These straws will show well which way the wind blew in Chicago for the last year or so.'"

in the war," she and her fellow members of peace organizations were convinced that "the country as a whole was for peace. . . ." They tried "again and again to discover a method for arousing and formulating the sentiment against war." In 1930 Miss Addams was still impressed with how strange it seemed "in the light of later experiences that [in 1915, 1916, and 1917] we so whole-heartedly believed . . . that if we could only get our position properly before the public, we would find an overwhelming response." She came to realize "only slowly" that, with the declaration of war, the group of people opposed to war shrank very rapidly.9

Jane Addams later described the uncertainties, the physical and moral strains, that resulted from this public opposition. She had, she wrote, experienced opposition before, but nothing like the wartime newspapers' "concerted and deliberate attempt" to misrepresent her views. Slowly she came to realize that this systematic attempt to malign and distort was part of the war technique itself, "an inevitable consequence of war. . . ." Instead of being able to move with mass opinion, she found herself in increasing opposition and felt the "destroying effect of 'aloneness.'" 10

Jane Addams rehearsed the democratic arguments that had supported progressive reform: modern democratic theory relied on popular impulses and depended on their growth for its evolutionary development; mass judgment and instinctive mass enthusiasm had great value; a human emotion was enhanced when millions shared it. She described her doubts of the rightness of opposing an overwhelming majority. It seemed "impossible" to hold out against the majority and "at moments absolutely unnatural, and one secretly yearned to participate in 'the folly of all mankind.'" Had the individual "the right" to oppose millions of his countrymen, she asked? Even "if one were right a


10. Jane Addams, Peace and Bread in Time of War, pp. 134, 135, 140. Miss Addams related this public opposition to her own health. She recalled that the war years were years of "semi-invalidism." "Suddenly to find every public utterance willfully misconstrued, every attempt at normal relationship repudiated, must react in a baffled suppression which is health-destroying. . . ." Social opprobrium and widespread misunderstanding had, during Miss Addams illness when the Ford peace ship sailed, "brought me very near to self pity, perhaps the lowest pit into which human nature can sink." See ibid., pp. 148, 139.
thousand times over in conviction, was he not absolutely wrong in abstaining from the community's action? 11

Then there was the practical objection that to criticize the war mood surrendered "all possibility of future influence." Miss Addams and her fellow pacifists knew "how feeble and futile" their efforts were against not only mass opinion, but also against "the coagulation of motives, the universal confusion of a world at war." She also recalled the fear of fanaticism. Her commitment to pragmatism warned her against "preferring a consistency of theory to the conscientious recognition of the social situation. . . ." To keep out of the war, some suggested, was "pure quietism, an acute failure to adjust . . . to the moral world." And as a pragmatist Jane Addams also saw how pacifism in wartime could not be realized in action. If a truth had to "vindicate itself in practice," if a "sincere and mature opinion" had to be justified in works, then pacifism in wartime was by the very nature of things a cul-de-sac. 12

Nevertheless Jane Addams denied that violence could advance democracy, which depended, she insisted, upon inner consent. Her realization that war sacrificed this democratic consent was "the most poignant moment" of the whole war period. Hull House was a registration station for the draft. Miss Addams knew many of the men who came to register and knew that some of them had come to America at least in part seeking freedom from military service. The registration line presented, she wrote later, "the final frontier of the hopes of their kind, the traditional belief in America as a refuge had come to an end. . . . All that had been told them of the American freedom, which they had hoped to secure for themselves and their children, had turned to ashes." One of the men who had been in a Hull House citizenship class to which Jane Addams had spoken when they got their first papers stopped in line and rebuked Miss Addams. Bitterly he thanked her for his being sent to Europe to fight. "I went into the citizenship class in the first place because you asked me to. If I hadn't my papers now I would be exempted." It seemed as if, Miss Addams concluded, "the whole theory of [democratic] self-government founded upon conscious participation and inner con-

11. Ibid., p. 140.
12. Ibid., pp. 142, 150.
sent, had fallen to the ground." "Social advance," she wrote, "depends as much upon the process through which it is secured as upon the result itself..." Social change was insecure if it was justified only as a war measure.\textsuperscript{13}

Jane Addams decided that it was no service to her country to continue the peace strategy she had pursued during the period of neutrality. Her neutral conference strategy had been based on a belief that there existed large numbers of people in every country opposed to the war. But public hysteria and the continued deliberate misrepresentation by the press finally convinced her that during wartime, it was "impossible for the pacifist to obtain an open hearing." After months of urging what she considered a "reasonable and vital alternative to war," she simply stopped talking about the effects of the war. "We gradually ceased to state our [pacifist] position as we became convinced that it served no practical purpose and, worse than that, often found that the immediate result was provocative."\textsuperscript{14}

Thus in the fall and winter of 1917–8 Jane Addams searched for ways of affirming humanitarian and democratic ideals in an America increasingly intolerant of any talk of peace. Her opportunity came with the establishment of a federal Department of Food Administration. She was attracted by Herbert Hoover's first appeal to Americans about food: "the situation is more than war, it is a problem of humanity."\textsuperscript{15} Work for Hoover's agency

\textsuperscript{13} Many Hull House residents did not follow Miss Addams in her pacifism, and, since one resident was head of the district draft board and the forms were difficult to fill out, Hull House was headquarters for the draft. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 133, 123, 117–8, 119.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 109, 111, 110, 141. The Woman's Peace party adopted in October, 1917, a policy statement which read: "We have avoided all criticism of our Government as to the declaration of war, and all activities that could be considered as obstructive in respect to the conduct of the war, and this not as a counsel of prudence, but as a matter of principle." \textit{Statement of the Executive Board of the National Woman's Peace Party}, issued October 25, 1917, SCPC. A perceptive interviewer wrote in the Boston \textit{Herald}, June 14, 1926, p. 16, col. 3: "She believes herself to have rendered the country all the service in her power once we were at war and to have done nothing to impede the success of our arms." A student of this period has observed that "on the whole, then, in late 1917 the strength of the antiwar Socialists and pacifists was of little consequence." Arno J. Mayer, \textit{Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 1917–1918} (New Haven, 1959), p. 350.

\textsuperscript{15} The Department of Food Administration was created on August 10, 1917. For Jane Addams' reaction see her "World's Food Supply and Woman's Obligation," \textit{Journal of Home Economics}, X (September, 1918), 389–90.
seemed to provide a chance to affirm civilized and humane ideals and also to mitigate the war spirit in America. Miss Addams spoke under the auspices of the Food Administration (and later the Committee on Public Information) in many states.\textsuperscript{16} She urged American women to conserve food and to help increase food production. She related the conservation and production of food to her humanitarian and democratic beliefs, and especially to her hopes for peace. Her speeches dealt with two related topics: the special relationship of women to the war through their traditional concern with food, and the relationship between food and the organization and reconstruction of international life after the war.

Miss Addams tried to show how the beginnings of culture involved women and food. She recalled later how she had read "endlessly" in Frazer's \textit{The Golden Bough}.\textsuperscript{17} The food spirits were "always feminine," she noted, perhaps from the natural association with fecundity and growth. In one of her speeches for the Food Administration, Jane Addams said that in primitive societies—"back of history itself"—women "were the first agriculturists and were for a long time the only inventors and developers of its processes." The refusal of women to desert their crops first broke the migratory pattern. "The desire to grow food for her children led to a fixed abode and a real home from which our democratic morality and customs are supposed to have originated."\textsuperscript{18}

Miss Addams urged wartime audiences to try to understand how this traditional concern for food imposed a special duty on women "to nurture the world." By understanding this primitive obligation American women could extend their sympathies and enlarge their "conception of duty in such wise that the consciousness of the world's [food] needs becomes the actual impulse" of their daily activities. Such a sympathetic response afforded "an opportunity to lay over again the foundations for a wider morality, as

\textsuperscript{16} Linn, \textit{Jane Addams}, p. 330 asserts that Miss Addams was "requested" to serve by Hoover.
women's concern for feeding her children made the beginning of an orderly domestic life." By her food appeal Jane Addams hoped, she later recalled, to "break through into more primitive and compelling motives than those inducing so many women to increase the war spirit. There was something as primitive and real about feeding the helpless as there was about the fighting and in the race history the tribal feeding of children antedated mass fighting by perhaps a million years." 19

War demanded a change in the nation's food habits, Miss Addams declared, if world famine was to be avoided. American women had to become aware of the needs of the whole world, and this awareness would be "in a sense but part of that long struggle from the blindness of individuality to the consciousness of common ends—almost an epitome of human progress itself." At the same time this change in food habits provided women with a long-sought opportunity. "From the time we were little children we have all of us, at moments at least, cherished overwhelming desires to be of use in the great world, to play a conscious part in its progress." These desires were frequently contradicted by household demands, or by the vague purposes of daily routine. But during the crisis of war, she said, usefulness to the world and household routine were "absolutely essential to each other." The great world purpose of feeding the starving could not be achieved without a conscious modification of women's domestic routine. This change was "probably the most compelling challenge which has been made upon women's constructive powers for centuries." 20

In a similar way, according to Miss Addams, the international organization of the world's food supply was altering the aims and methods of international politics. War made the question of the production and distribution of the world's total food supply a matter of international concern and organization. The Allies established a joint food commission to collect and apportion food supplies on the basis of need, not profit. Thus, she said, the world's governments had been forced to assume the responsibility to see that food was apportioned fairly; commercial competition

could not be trusted to feed the feeble and helpless." This new responsibility might unloose a "new and powerful force" in international relations, which had lacked the kind of humane modification that appeared in a nation's "internal politics by the increasing care of the poor, the concern for the man at the bottom. . . . In international affairs the nations have still dealt almost exclusively with political and commercial affairs considered as matters of "rights," consequently they have never been humanized in their relations to each other as they have been in their internal affairs." Wartime efforts to distribute food justly meant that each nation had to make "certain concessions to the common good that the threat of famine may be averted." Jane Addams labelled this development a revolution toward "a more reasonable world order . . . the war itself forming its matrix." 21

The organization of the world's food supply provided a model for postwar international organization, Miss Addams said hopefully. The officers of the Woman's Peace party rejoiced that the United States and the Allies had acted in common regarding "the conservation and distribution of food supplies and other matters, quite outside the military field. . . ." Such international organization should be extended, the women said. "An interparliamentary conference thus developed might from [sic] the nucleus of a permanent international parliament. . . . Such an organization," the party's resolution read in words strongly suggesting Jane Addams' authorship, "arising in response to actual world needs, is in line with the genesis and growth of all permanent political institutions." 22

Citing John Dewey, Miss Addams said that many discussions of international leagues and courts failed because they lacked a focus for more energies and moral ideals. This lack of focus was especially evident after war, which scattered and diffused moral energies. So often, she noted, enthusiasts for a new international order were reduced to the negative task of preventing war. They "had none of the positive incentive which arises from looking after social and economic needs." Various efforts to feed

22. Statement of the Executive Board of the Woman's Peace Party, issued October 25, 1917, SCPC.
the world might provide just this missing focus and incentive, she suggested. The attempt to feed the feeble and helpless was "constantly bringing into existence new obligations which may form the natural and normal foundations for a genuine international government." 23

If energized pity for the hungry and dependent became the new motive in international affairs, Miss Addams hypothesized, some of the political causes of the war might be solved: the need for Russian wheat in western Europe might secure the internationalization of the Bosporus; the world’s need for food from the Euphrates valley, rather than rival national ambitions, would determine the building and control of a Mesopotamian railroad; the need of every nation for a ready access to the sea might secure a railroad through a strip of international territory for landlocked nations like Serbia. "It is possible," Miss Addams said in hopeful summary,

that the more sophisticated questions of national grouping and territorial control would gradually adjust themselves if the paramount human question of food for the hungry be fearlessly and drastically treated upon an international basis. The League of Nations, destined to end wars, . . . may be founded not upon broken bits of international law, but upon ministrations to primitive human needs. The League would then be organized de facto as all the really stable political institutions in the world have been. 24

In these ways Jane Addams filled the war years with work for peace. She continued to believe that humanitarian ideals and reforms were the best way to displace the war spirit. She labored for the same ideals during the war that she had worked for before the war: the nurture of human life, the defense of the weak and helpless. These ideals provided what she called the matrix for new duties, for wider sympathy, and for an extended international ethic. The impulses and incentives and beliefs that justified her prewar humanitarian reforms also justified the peace and international order for which she worked during the war.

The spirit of war was not as easy to defeat as the Central Powers

24. Ibid., p. 656.
had been. Long after November, 1918, the ghost of Caesar haunted international life. Like many others, the women who gathered at The Hague in 1915 had not expected any fundamental transformation in European life. They assumed that the peace conference following the war would be in a neutral country, and they decided to convene again at the same time and place as the peace conference. Prevented from doing this by the choice of Paris as the site of the armistice negotiations, the women gathered at Zurich on May 12, 1919 for their second congress. Jane Addams noted that the date coincided with the enlargement of the Versailles Conference to include delegates from the Central Powers, when "in a sense the official Peace Conference as such has formally begun." 25 The women who assembled at Zurich had discarded their assumption that peace would restore the old Europe they had known before 1914. The delegates were conscious of meeting in a time of social and political revolution. They met old friends so changed by war's privations that they were scarcely recognizable. They were outraged at what the civilized world had permitted itself to do, and to become. Indignation emboldened these women to pass a series of radical resolutions. "The events of the last four years have proved, that our civilization has completely failed," the ladies resolved. "Our lives have been dominated by a purely materialistic philosophy, by a policy of sheer force and violence. . . . [We seek] to establish a basis for a new human civilization." 26

The first concern of the congress was the food problem, which Jane Addams discussed in her presidential address. "Now that the whole world has been brought to its knees by hunger," perhaps the nations could approach each other on an older and surer basis. Constitutions and resolutions had not seemed to work in preventing war. Perhaps, she said, the primitive desire to feed hungry children—whether in Serbia, or Poland, or in Rumania, for the life of one child was as valuable as that of any other—was a strong enough bond to hold the race together. But the food question also had darker potentialities, which the Allies exploited with their food blockade. The delegates at Zurich quickly adopted

a resolution, presented by Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, which urged that the Allies immediately lift the blockade; it was a "disgrace to civilization." The ladies urged that all the resources of the world—food, raw material, money, and transport—be organized immediately for relief, and further, that all luxury trade be prohibited and food be rationed, until the necessaries of life were supplied to all. This resolution was telegraphed to President Wilson at Paris. He replied promptly that the message appealed "both to my head and to my heart," but that the outlook for such action was "extremely unpromising, because of infinite practical difficulties." 27

The Zurich delegates soon discovered what Wilson meant by practical difficulties. They were in session when the terms of the Versailles Treaty were made public and were one of the first organizations to comment on them. The women deeply regretted, they said, that the Treaty "should so seriously violate the principles upon which alone a just and lasting peace can be secured, and which the democracies of the world had come to accept." The ladies passed a stinging indictment of the Treaty:

By guaranteeing the fruits of the secret treaties to the conquerors, the terms of peace tacitly sanction secret diplomacy, deny the principles of self-determination, recognise the right of the victors to the spoils of war, and create all over Europe discords and animosities, which can only lead to future wars. By the demand for the disarmament of one set of belligerents only, the principle of justice is violated and the rule of force is continued. By the financial and economic proposals a hundred million people of this generation in the heart of Europe are condemned to poverty, disease and despair, which must result in the spread of hatred and anarchy within each nation.

The delegates urged amendments to bring the Treaty "into harmony with those principles first enumerated by President Wilson upon the faithful carrying out of which the honour of the Allied peoples depends." 28 The League Covenant was the most dis-


appointing part of the Treaty. The woman passed many detailed suggestions, some of which endorsed provisions of the Covenant, some of which suggested additions to strengthen the League, and some of which denounced omission from the Covenant of principles that the Fourteen Points asserted. 29

The most important action of the congress was its insistence that civilization and a stable (and democratic) international order demanded an end to violence and coercion. An English delegate introduced a resolution which endorsed self-determination for Ireland by saying that "the test of the civilization of a State is the extent to which it relies upon moral appeal and consent rather than coercion. . . ." Socialist delegates to the Zurich meeting secured passage of resolutions recognizing "a fundamentally just demand underlying most of . . . [the] revolutionary movements" and declaring sympathy with the workers everywhere. But coupled with these sentiments the women at Zurich reasserted "their faith in methods of peace and believe[d] it [was] their special part in this revolutionary age to counsel against violence from any side." 30

Jane Addams formulated this central idea of the congress in her closing speech. She believed, she told the delegates, that moral force could accomplish things that military force could not. She illustrated this point with a story from Herbert Hoover. Food destined for Russia had to be unloaded and transshipped by men whose families were desperately hungry. Only after a moral appeal was made to these dock and transport workers were they willing to let the food go through. The lesson was obvious: "We shall have to believe in spiritual power. We shall have to learn to use moral energy, to put a new sort of force into the world and believe that it is a vital thing—the only thing, in this moment of sorrow and death and destruction, that will heal the world. . . ." 31

But this new force was new only in scope. The moral appeal that had supported progressive domestic reform was now to be made international. All the disappointments of war, and the fresh disappointment in the peace designed at Versailles, did not destroy Jane Addams' faith in moral energy, in the possibility of civilized and just relations among nations.

30. Ibid., p. 259.
31. Ibid., p. 237. Miss Addams was again made an envoy of the congress. She presented the congress resolutions to statesmen at the peace conference at Versailles. Her efforts had no effect.
In June, 1919, Jane Addams, accompanied by Alice Hamilton, returned to Germany. They investigated food and health conditions and distributed the first private relief in Germany for the American Friends’ Service Committee. "In the midst of it all only the feeding of the hungry seemed to offer the tonic of beneficent activity," Miss Addams recalled. She saw at first hand the heart-rending effects of the Allied food blockade, continued through the seven months of armistice. "Our impressions," Miss Addams reported in the Survey, "crowded each other so fast that they merged into one, an impression of mass hunger as we had never imagined it, hunger of millions continued month after month for three years or more. . . ." Jane Addams and Alice Hamilton concentrated in their official report on the high incidence of tuberculosis, rickets, and acute nephritis, which they blamed on lack of food. They also described health and hospital conditions. Dr. Hamilton, perhaps, wrote the part of their report that described how doctors were easily able to diagnose ailments and then, for lack of medical equipment and medicine, had to watch their patients die. Medical men were reduced to a kind of horrible resignation and were almost glad that their patients had so little resistance, and died quickly.22

Jane Addams recalled later that it had been the plight of the children which had most affected her on this trip. The little emaciated bodies, stunted, listless, were "incredibly pathetic and unreal." On a playground in Leipzig the children were "utterly indifferent" to the playground director’s announcements of prizes and activities. Only with the promise that perhaps they would get a little milk in their soup "day after tomorrow" did the children "break out into the most ridiculous, feeble little cheer ever heard." Challenged whether he could produce the milk, the director said he was not sure, but he had some prospect. And he said, in words which recalled Miss Addams’ own words before the war and which must have touched her deeply, children had to have something to hope for, that was the prerogative of youth. Both women reported that they were constantly challenged to justify all of the Allies’ actions, not only the terrible food blockade. Their discouraging report concluded that much remained "to be

32. Jane Addams, Peace and Bread in Time of War, p. 166; Jane Addams and Alice Hamilton, "After the Lean Years, Impressions of Food Conditions in Germany when Peace Was Signed," Survey, XLII (September 6, 1919), 793.
done in the way of interpretation and honest discussion before even a beginning of mutual understanding can be made." After her return to America, Miss Addams spoke on European relief during October, November, and December under the auspices of the American Friends' Service Committee.33

In these anxious months of late 1919 and early 1920, when the pacifists' worst prophesies of what war would destroy seemed to have come true, Jane Addams also returned to the cause of democratic and humanitarian reform. In her search for some connection with the overwhelming problems of reconstruction that she had just viewed at first hand, she returned to familiar, but now more urgent, efforts, as indicated in an address to the National Conference of Social Work in 1920.34 Social workers had not been immune to wartime hysteria, and the conference was divided over questions of loyalty and patriotism. The Illinois section had withdrawn from the national conference to indicate its disapproval of the election of Owen Lovejoy as president. Lovejoy's offense was public praise of Eugene V. Debs. "The Atlantic City Conference [in 1919] was permeated with pacifism, socialism, parlor bolshevism," noted the editorial writer of the Illinois section's quarterly.35

Jane Addams took the occasion of the 1920 conference to emphasize again the need for social workers to advance humanitarian reform. The uncertainties and suspicions within the conference could be solved, she said, only by a return to the basic principles of social work and social reform. She described how war had interrupted and reversed the steady growth of the international effort to abolish hunger, poverty, and disease, to free childhood from danger, in sum, to enlarge life. The period of reconstruction was a challenge "so imperious and overwhelming that everything else must be put aside." Social workers who did

34. In 1917 the National Conference of Charities and Correction became the National Conference of Social Work.
not took hold of this great world-situation failed in an essential obligation; they betrayed the original purposes of social work. "After all, what is the spirit of social work? It was founded upon genuine, human pity, upon the desire to relieve suffering, to give food to the hungry and to shelter the homeless. . . ." Jane Addams urged her colleagues to "get back to that" because it underlay all the subdivisions and subtleties of social work activities. If social workers cut themselves off from these primitive human motives at the basis of social work, they would injure and cripple the spirit of social service for years to come.  

For Jane Addams, feeding Europe after the war was more basic than political ideology, and she joined all sorts of voluntary efforts to raise money in America for food and medicines. In a newspaper interview in 1921 she is quoted as urging help for the starving in Austria and Russia without "so many ifs and ands" about it. You can be as savagely anti-Bolshevik as you please, but you can't be or shouldn't be anti-human." Speaking to an audience of Kansas farmers, Miss Addams asserted that Americans had "no right to talk about a surplus crop of wheat or corn until [the underfed children of Austria and Armenia] are fed." Americans should bend all their energies to bring American surplus and European need together. Politics simply was not involved, Miss Addams asserted in her special appeal for relief for people in the Volga wheat region. Succoring the starving, restoring civilization in Europe, was above politics.

The civilized and democratic values that impelled Miss Addams to advocate relief to both democrat and Bolshevik also persuaded her to become one of the seven members of the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland. The commission, sponsored by the Nation, provided an opportunity for American liberals to

37. Letterheads at SCPC show Miss Addams as chairman in 1920 of American Relief for Russian Women and Children; honorary chairman of the American Welfare Association for German Children; honorary vice-president in 1921 of the American Committee for Relief in Ireland; a member of the board of directors of the Women's Emergency Committee for Near East Relief in 1922 and of the Russian Famine Fund in 1923. See Merle Curti, American Philanthropy Abroad, a History (New Brunswick, 1963), pp. 259–300.
express their sympathy for the Irish struggle for democratic self-government and to condemn the British for their cruel—uncivilized—military campaign. The commission members noted in their report that they were concerned only with aspects of the Irish situation which appealed to "the sympathy, conscience and sense of justice of mankind...[which] cannot be ignored if the traditions of civilization are to be the basis of human comity."

The commission elicited testimony that emphasized the use of passive resistance, women's participation in the democratic struggle, and the temperance of the Irish as opposed to the drunkenness of the British army men. Testimony also centered on the atrocities committed by the Black and Tans. British military actions were labeled "a relic of barbarism," almost without parallel in the practice of civilized nations. British justice was discredited, Anglo-Saxon civilization was dishonored, the commission's report declared, and "decent folk, everywhere are shamed and scandalized that such things can still be in their day and generation." The remedy was democracy, these American progressives asserted. A majority of the Irish people had sanctioned the Irish Republic by ballot. They were giving their allegiance to it, paying its taxes, and respecting the decisions of its courts and civil officials. This democratic decision was the solution to the Irish problem.

Miss Addams' renewed participation in voluntary organizations such as the Irish commission reflected discouragement over her inability to get official action in 1915 and 1916, and also discouragement with the Versailles settlement, and especially with the League of Nations. When she returned from Europe in 1919 she was torn between approval and opposition to the League. "I never said a word against it, but I could not go about advocating it." The unsatisfactory peace at Versailles, according to Jane Addams, was partly the President's fault. In the only bitter criticism she ever published, she attacked Wilson's whole theory of leadership. . . . I hotly and no doubt unfairly asked myself whether any man had the right to rate his


moral leadership so high that he could consider the sacrifice of the lives of thousands of his young countrymen a necessity? . . . All the study of modern social science is but a revelation of the fallacy of such a point of view, a discrediting of the Carlyle contention that the people must be led into the ways of righteousness by the experience, acumen and virtues of a great man.⁴¹

American entrance into the war seemed only to have strengthened the hands of those demanding the harshest peace terms from a crushed Germany. Jane Addams asserted that Wilson had lost rather than gained influence by entering the war, because he went to Versailles only as a bargainer and not as a disinterested adjudicator. The world's hopes had centered on Wilson because of his antiwar utterances, she wrote. Had the President "stood firmly against participation in war [he] could have had his way with the common people in every country." Miss Addams softened her indictment of Wilson by blaming the debacle at Versailles not on him personally, but on war itself. It was not the men at Versailles, but "the human spirit itself which failed, . . . the human spirit under a temptation which an earlier peace might have diminished." ⁴²

Jane Addams believed that the most pressing problems at the end of the war were humanitarian, not, as the peacemakers thought, political. The politicians at Versailles had transformed the League of Nations from a great democratic instrument for peace into an antidemocratic force. The League's "very structure and functioning is pervaded by the war spirit, the victorious disciplining of the defeated, whereas the people had dreamed of a League of Peace lifting up all those who had been the victim of militarism." Miss Addams urged the League consciously to "focus shattered moral energies and . . . make effective moral ideas upon a more extended scale than that to which the time has become accustomed." ⁴³ The great danger to the League, according to


Miss Addams, was that its first work involved guaranteeing a purely political peace dependent on old political motives. The League should first perform some humanitarian act of which no other agency was capable. Once established on an humanitarian basis, she wrote, the League might turn to the political problems of peace and disarmament with a fund of sympathy, confidence, affection, and trust.  

Although she criticized the League of Nations as a defective instrument, Miss Addams became one of its active supporters in America. Her initial doubts were dispelled by the first meeting of the League Assembly in November, 1920, several sessions of which she observed in Geneva.

I come back to America from Europe a reconvert [to the League of Nations]. When the League was formed I was for it. I campaigned for it. Later I had reactions. I began to wonder, to doubt. But after fresh contact with Europe, I no longer doubt. I once more believe strongly in the League of Nations and heartily wish our country might associate itself with the work the League alone can do. Put it to yourself this way: If you abolish the League, or if it dies, what is there to take its place? There is no answer.

Miss Addams described how the meeting of the League Assembly had cleared up all sorts of things. After the disappointments of Versailles, it was a relief to find that after all "the nations of the earth could get together and discuss openly and freely and also kindly, for the most part, and even unselfishly, the genuine concerns of the world. The meeting of the Assembly was like the beginning of a new era. . . ." Miss Addams singled out for particular praise the publicity about international affairs that the Assembly promoted. Publicity, Miss Addams wrote perhaps recalling her struggles for a democratic peace, was "all to the good"; and the Assembly fostered "publicity for the care of backward people, publicity for all treaties between nations which will in a specified time be invalid if they are not registered with the Secretariat at Geneva; publicity in international affairs, . . . most of all the free and open discussion. After December, 1920,  

Miss Addams became an articulate advocate of co-operation with the League and with its specialized agencies.\(^4\)

The Washington Naval Conference also revived Jane Addams' hopes for peace. The conference had "practical results" because it decreased naval power and construction. She was especially pleased with the conference because it seemed to show after the bitter experiences of the war years that public opinion could operate in international affairs in favor of peace. No international matter "ever received such an impact from public opinion as the conference for the limitations of armaments felt in Washington," she declared in 1922. "And there is no doubt but that the whole thing developed tremendously under the pressure of public opinion." The situation gave one "a fresh start—a de novo opening as it were, for this kind of public opinion." \(^4\)

Public opposition during these trying years was not able to convince Jane Addams that the democratic and cultural ideals for which she had labored so long were false. During the war she discovered ways to reaffirm her belief in the nurture and up-building of human life. After the war the League of Nations seemed to offer an instrument for the reconstruction of those same cultural ideals. The democratic procedures in the League Assembly and the organization of public opinion in favor of peace which the naval conference showed seemed to promise a revival of democracy enfeebled by the war. For all her discouragement about mass opinion under the pressures of war, Jane Addams set to work in the 1920's to cultivate support for the ideals to which she had devoted her life. During the last fifteen years of her life, she explored new openings, new developments in international social and political experience, new motives that might strengthen men's will toward international peace. The years after sixty were, for Miss Addams, filled with the search for what she called international comity.

\(^{45}\) Miss Addams is quoted in the Cincinnati Post, September 29, 1921; Jane Addams, "Potential Advantages of the Mandate System," pp. 73, 74. Compare F. P. Walters, History of the League of Nations (London, 1952), I, 126-7: "It could not be doubted that the [1920] Assembly had revived the interest and the hopes which had illuminated the earlier versions of the League... the Assembly had begun the process of pulling the League away from the centripetal force of the Treaty of Versailles and all it stood for. . . ."