Jane Addams On Peace, War, And International Understanding, 1899-1932

Jane Addams

Addams’s unyielding pacifism during the Great War drew criticism from politicians and patriots who deemed her the “most dangerous woman in America.” Even those who had embraced her ideals of social reform condemned her outspoken opposition to U.S. entry into World War I or were ambivalent about her peace platforms. Turning away from the details of the war itself, Addams relies on memory and introspection in this autobiographical portrayal of efforts to secure peace during the Great War. “I found myself so increasingly reluctant to interpret the motives of other people that Jane Addams has written: ‘Jane Addams’ account of her interview with the foreign ministers of Europe’ -- subject(s): World War, 1914-1918, World politics, Peace, Women and peace, Women's International League ‘Democracy and Social Ethics (Psychoanalysis for Beginners) (Psychoanalysis for Beginnerâ€™s)’ ‘Twenty Years At Hull House’ ‘Newer ideals of peace’ -- subject(s): Peace, Municipal government, Working class, Social justice, Political participation, Labor movement, Labor and laboring classes ‘Jane Addams on peace, war, and international un... Addamsâ€™ understanding of peace was deeply rooted in her sense of optimism about human beings. Addams believed â€œhuman beings are more similar than they are different and what unites is stronger than what dividesâ€ (Elshtain 2002, p. 219).Â The inevitable failure of war and its consequences created a new opportunity for women to demonstrate their contribution to international affairs. According to Addams, women should â€œtry to prevent the worst damage from being done-to feed the hungry, to bind up the wounded, to heal broken bodies and spirits insofar as one canâ€ (Elshtain 2002, p. 249).Â As the Peace Partyâ€™s representative, Addams attended the International Congress of Women at the Hague and was selected to serve as head of the commission to find an end to the war.