

CHAPTER III

THE EUROPEAN WAR AND ANIMAL PROTECTION

As may be seen from the table on page 25, the first two years of the World War affected the activities of the American societies for animal protection little if at all. In the annual reports of many of the societies for 1914, slight reference was made to it. During 1915 and 1916 the *National Humane Review* and some of the other humane publications carried notices of the sufferings that animals were necessarily undergoing in the battle zone. The American Humane Association in its annual conferences of these years did not discuss this subject at great length and made only passing reference to the English organizations that were endeavoring to relieve this suffering.

Some few societies succeeded in raising a rather impracticable issue during this period. All animals sent to European battlefields were certain to suffer; these societies sought to confine such animal agonies to European horses and mules insofar as this could be accomplished by preventing the shipment of American transport animals. Several letters to this effect were published in the *National Humane Review* and in *Our Dumb Animals*. Letters from one or two of the smaller societies stated that their secretaries also corresponded with various government officials to this effect. Societies located in the larger ports and terminal centers met this problem by making certain that the condition of the animals congregated in stations awaiting transportation was not unendurable.²

² *Vide Annual Reports of Amer. S. P. C. A. and La. S. P. C. A. for 1916.*

As early as 1914 the Connecticut Humane Society foresaw a problem that would arise if the war should be of such duration as to cause a steady shipment of draft animals from this country. In the *Annual Report* of that year, the president of the Society said: "By sending horses abroad for war, our own supply will be seriously diminished. The price of horses will be high. Fewer new horses will be put into service. More old and poor ones will continue in use and carry the burden. Thus demands upon S. P. C. A.s for their relief will be largely increased."¹

The *National Humane Review* during 1915 and 1916 noted the mounting price of horses and mules and commented on the poor condition of many animals in use during the latter part of that period, particularly the type of horses appearing at the auction block.² The Louisiana S. P. C. A. in its 1915 report specifically referred to this phenomenon:

We find more old animals on the streets now than heretofore, caused by the scarcity or the terribly high cost of animals at the present time, resulting from the European War drawing on the American market. The price of horses has advanced 35% during the year. The best grades are no longer obtainable at any price and the poor owner has to purchase decrepit animals at the auction block. Firms who heretofore sold their stock at the end of each year have ceased to do so, holding on to the old ones, they being better than the present supply that is offered.³

This degeneration in the quality of animals used continued right through the war period, increasing the labor of all anti-cruelty societies. After the spring of 1917, many societies found another drain upon their resources in the aid

¹ *Conn. Hum. Soc., 34th Ann. Rpt.*, p. 11.

² *Vide Mass. S. P. C. A., Ann. Rpt. for 1916.*

³ *La. S. P. C. A., 28th Ann. Rpt.*, p. 16.

they extended to the veterinary service of the government and to the Red Star. In the matter of assisting the War Department, several societies allowed local pride to outweigh common sense. At least two bought animal ambulances which they desired to present to the Government, but which proved impossible of transportation to France.

After America's entry into the War, some societies found themselves weakened in another direction. The American S. P. C. A. noted in 1918 that "many old employees entered the military service and it was impossible to replace at short notice men who by reason of long years of training had become proficient in their particular line of work. Others were forced by the high cost of living to seek the larger salaries paid by the commercial world. All organizations supported wholly or in part by public generosity also suffered financially from the stress of war."³ The Massachusetts S. P. C. A. and the Pennsylvania S. P. C. A. felt the same loss.

This blow fell heaviest on the larger organizations with more or less extensive salaried staffs. In small local societies the age of the members for the most part precluded war service. Far more serious to all societies, large and small, were the falling-off of contributions and the increase of costs due to the rise of prices. As was only to be expected, animal societies suffered heavily from the competition of war-time charities. This was felt even before the entry of the United States into the War. The 1915 report of the Louisiana S. P. C. A. remarked, "In point of membership, I think we are still feeling the effects of the European War to some extent, as calls upon the charitable public of New Orleans have been frequent and urgent during the past year."²

¹ *Amer. S. P. C. A., 53rd Ann. Rpt. (1918)*, p. 5.

² *La. S. P. C. A., 28th Ann. Rpt. (1915)*, p. 5.

A little later the *National Humane Review* commented upon the effect of the War: "Recently, several societies have written to the American Humane Association stating that their work has practically ceased; that they have no money left with which to do humane work and that they will have to close their doors."¹

The following table showing the income of the Hudson District S. P. C. A. of New York State makes clear how seriously the War affected the finances of a moderately large society:

RECEIPTS OF THE HUDSON DISTRICT S. P. C. A. FROM ALL SOURCES

1913	\$22,500.57
1914	18,431.81
1915	15,576.66
1916	10,574.84
1917	10,348.48
1918	7,003.97
1919	13,366.54
1920	10,488.86
1921	16,234.76

In the Far West, the Los Angeles Society reported difficulties in raising its income traceable to the War: "During the War, the purchase of Liberty Bonds and contributions to agencies which were helping in the Great Cause made it impracticable for the Society to call upon the public at large for funds."²

The rise in prices beginning in the spring of 1915 after the temporary depression in this country at the outbreak of the War, likewise worked hardship upon anti-cruelty societies. During 1915 the pressure of European war orders and the high prices paid for them caused an increase of production in several fields of industry. This gained momentum throughout 1915 and 1916, carrying with it a

¹ *National Humane Review*, vol. iii, p. 205.

² *Los Angeles S. P. C. A., Ann. Rpt. for 1920.*

gradual increase in the prices of all commodities. The war finance policy of the United States government augmented the inflation which continued, except for a short interruption in the winter of 1918-1919, until the summer of 1920. The early stages of the price increase aroused no comment; by 1918, however, its effects were felt by anti-cruelty societies as by all other organizations and individuals. Those societies maintaining shelters and doing animal relief work were the hardest hit. Again the large societies were the worst sufferers. The Louisiana S. P. C. A. complained that "the high cost of dogcatching has reached such altitudes that it cost the Society more to operate the dog-pound last year than the total receipts from dog licenses have amounted to."¹

One branch of the activities of the Rhode Island Humane Education Society since its founding has been to issue an humane art calendar. In 1919, although the company that supplied these calendars to the Society did so at cost, the directors of the Society were uncertain whether they could afford to continue the distribution of them. In the end they compromised by sending out 1919 pads to be attached to 1918 backs. In 1920 their calendar bill was four times the pre-War figure, and the precedent of the previous year was followed; the 1920 backs were made so that 1921 pads might be attached to them if necessary.²

A financial problem that faced more than one city society was whether it should enter the local Community Chest. This organization was an outgrowth of war charity needs. In effect, it was a financial federation of the charities of the neighborhood. A simultaneous drive was made for all these charities, and the resulting fund was then apportioned among them according to their needs. In return,

¹ *La S. P. C. A., 32nd Ann. Rpt (1919), p. 5.*

² *Rhode Island Humane Education Society, 16th Ann. Rpt. (1920), p. 6.*

each society had to pledge itself not to make a separate appeal for funds upon its own account. Several animal protective societies entered their respective community chests. A few among them, the Arizona Humane Society being one, found the plan advantageous and advocated it.¹ A larger number duplicated the unfortunate experience of the Rochester Humane Society which found its income greatly decreased by dependence on the Rochester (N. Y.) Community Chest.² In most community chests animal protective societies found themselves out of favor; "people before animals" was a natural slogan. Moreover, under the rules of the community chests, these societies had to sacrifice their membership lists, losing thus the support that comes from an enthusiastic personnel.³

The American Humane Association set its face against community chests from their very initiation. During 1917 and 1918 every number of the *National Humane Review* carried an editorial by President Stillman criticizing the idea. In one such he quoted with approval the following: "I believe that the Community Chest is unwise, un-American, and undesirable. It puts the brake on individual initiative, and shackles progressive and immediate improvement. It has been particularly injurious to societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals."⁴

In brief, the World War distinctly increased the labors of the animal protective societies by enlarging the opportunities for cruelty through the use of poorer draught animals and the additional labor forced upon them by the exigencies of the War. Many societies also felt that one of the psycho-

¹ *Humane Monthly*, vol. i, p. 11.

² *Vide supra*, p. 35.

³ *National Humane Review*, vol. viii, p. 175.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. x, p. 171.

logical reactions of the War was to release many of the more brutal instincts of mankind, and that animals suffered thereby. On the other hand, the financial burdens of the War—Liberty Bond drives and war charities—cut off no little financial support from anti-cruelty societies. American societies were not prostrated as were those of some of the belligerent countries, but they suffered severely. Some of the weaker ones collapsed entirely, the stronger in many cases found it necessary to limit their work.

Out of the sufferings of animals in the World War grew a new organization, the Red Star. As early as October 1914, there was a humane movement for the protection of the animals in the war zones. In that month President Stillman of the American Humane Association wrote in the *National Humane Review*:

What is now needed for the horses is an adequate international convention which will undertake to do more to protect those unfortunate brutes which have become the victims of battle. Great Britain and Germany already have had orders issued that men shall be designated to destroy war horses which have been wounded or severely injured. A new world-wide international agreement should be instituted whereby each country will undertake to have equine Purple Cross veterinarians present on the field of conflict to care skillfully for battle horses and to relieve their sufferings as humanely and promptly as possible. An international movement is already under way seeking to accomplish this end.¹

The Purple Cross referred to by President Stillman was started in England at the outbreak of the War by the anti-vivisection societies. It never functioned actively and was soon superseded by the international organization known as the Red Star. At the commencement of hostili-

¹*Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 229.

ties, Swiss federal and cantonal authorities organized the Red Star Society to look after the care of war animals. A meeting of the friends of animals was held and the humane organizations of all countries asked to cooperate.¹ No action was taken by American societies during the first two years of the War, although each of the combatants organized its own Red Star service.

On May 22, 1916, Secretary of War Baker wrote to President Stillman as follows: "It is believed that plans similar in tenor to those of the Red Cross could be very advantageously adopted by your Society for rendering organized aid to injured animals in time of war, and if your Society will undertake this work, the War Department will be very glad to cooperate with you."²

On July 26, 1916, the American Red Star Animal Relief was organized as a department of the American Humane Association to cooperate with the United States Veterinary Corps. The first Red Star branch was formed in Newport, R. I.³ The branch organizations were expected to assist in furnishing supplies and equipment for the veterinary service of the army and to endeavor to secure a suitable personnel for war-time volunteer field service. In addition, all branches were asked to contribute to the Red Star Fund of the American Humane Association.

During the winter of 1916 a few branches were formed. The spread of the Red Star was much more active after the entry of the United States into the War. In 1917 its organization was extended to include auxiliaries and junior leagues. In 1918 in Los Angeles alone, there were 28,179

¹*Ibid.*, vol. iii, pp. 156-157.

²*American Humane Association, 41st Ann. Rpt.*, p. 14.

³*National Humane Review*, vol. iv, p. 193.

members of the Junior Red Star League, and they contributed \$8,182.53 to the Red Star Fund.¹

With the cessation of hostilities the main program of the American Red Star came to an end. Nevertheless, it was a powerful organization with the impetus of success behind it. It had a strong financial foundation and it was easy to divert its resources into peace-time channels. At the 1919 conference of the American Humane Association the president said:

The special function of the American Red Star Animal Relief is to meet conditions of suffering that exist on too large a scale to be handled successfully by local anti-cruelty societies. Examples are the Halifax explosion, the fire near Duluth, epidemic disease as in Colorado in 1919, and Texas coast storms. It is for situations such as these that the Red Star was founded and will be maintained.²

Since the War most of the attention of the Red Star has been devoted to bettering the condition of the western range stock.³ In 1919 a representative visited the range country and carefully investigated conditions. The matter was then taken up with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Leaflets were published on range stock shelter.⁴

Apart from this, the broad peace program originally mapped out for the Red Star has not been followed out. With the cessation of its war activities, much of the enthusiasm that helped to launch it has died. It exists today as a skeleton organization rather than as an active one. Its finances for 1922 were as follows:

¹ *A. H. A., 42nd Ann. Rpt.*, p. 23; *vide also National Humane Review*, vol. v, p. 144.

² *A. H. A., 43rd Ann. Rpt.*, p. 4.

³ *Vide infra*, pp. 118-119.

⁴ *A. H. A., 43rd Ann. Rpt.*, p. 15.

Balance, Sept. 1, 1921 \$2,438.79

RECEIPTS

Donations and contributions	\$1,931.18
Memberships	7,076.16
Branches and auxiliaries	1,052.32
Leaflets and supplies	174.46
Memorial Tablet fund	828.75
Refund on convention expense	109.63
Interest on Liberty Bonds	12.75
Total receipts	<u>\$11,185.25</u>
Total	<u>\$13,624.04</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Salary of Director General	\$1,500.00
Salaries of office employees	5,257.69
<i>National Humane Review</i> and printing	3,699.16
Rent, heat, light and janitor	600.00
Postage, expressage, telephone and telegraph	817.65
Miscellaneous	226.93
Office supplies	397.48
Convention expense	150.00
Auditing	104.00
Total disbursements	<u>\$12,752.91</u>
Balance	<u>\$871.13</u>

Additional expenditures of \$1,752.96 for range stock relief literature, a memorial tablet, and repairs and storage for an animal ambulance were made out of a special fund.¹

¹ *A. H. A., 46th Ann. Rpt.*, p. 51.