

John Dewey, America's Peace-Minded Educator

Charles F. Howlett and Audrey Cohan

“Although John Dewey’s reputation as a leading philosopher and educator is well established, far less is known about his participation in the quest for a peaceful world. Charles Howlett and Audrey Cohan help restore the balance by providing an important, detailed, and well-researched study of Dewey’s intense, sometimes painful engagement with issues of war and peace.”—Lawrence S. Wittner, professor of history emeritus, University at Albany, State University of New York

“Howlett and Cohan have provided a full and lucid account of John Dewey’s thought and activism on behalf of ‘relative pacifism.’ Much less well known than Dewey’s vigorous support of American intervention in World War I, the story of his subsequent effort to walk back from the abyss of modern war has now been given its due.”—Robert Westbrook, author of *John Dewey and American Democracy*

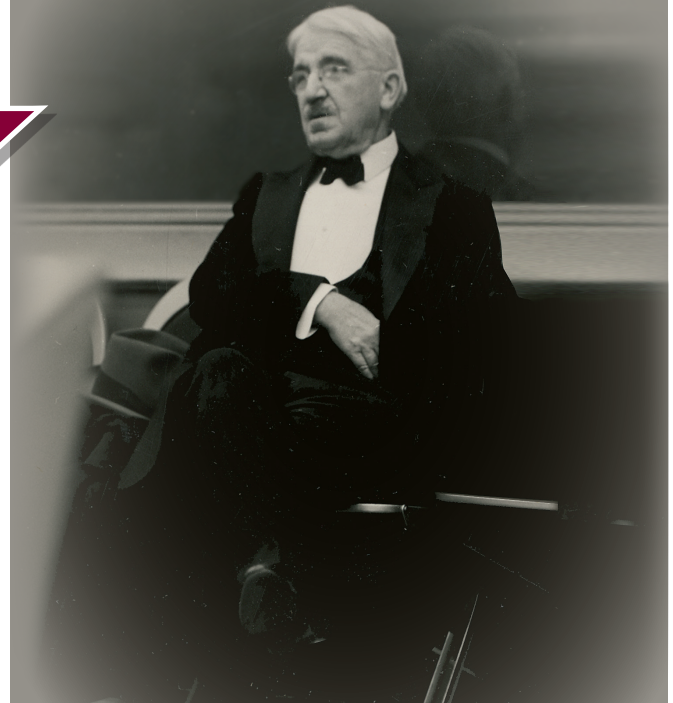
The pacifist activism of one of America’s leading educational theorists

John Dewey is perhaps best known for his interest in the study of pragmatic philosophy and his application of progressive ideas to the field of education. Carrying his ideas and actions beyond the academy, he tied his philosophy to pacifist ideology in America after World War I in order to achieve a democratic world order. Although his work and life have been well documented, his role in the postwar peace movement has been generally overlooked.

Charles F. Howlett and Audrey Cohan take a close look at Dewey’s many undertakings on behalf of world peace. This volume covers Dewey’s support of, and subsequent disillusionment with, the First World War as well as his postwar involvement in trying to prevent another world war. Other topics include his interest in peace movements in education, his condemnation of American military intervention in Latin America and of armaments and munitions makers during the Great Depression, his defense of civil liberties during World War II, and his cautions at the start of the atomic age. The concluding epilogue explores how Dewey’s ideas can still be useful to peace education today.

JOHN DEWEY

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Charles F. Howlett and Audrey Cohan

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Charles F. Howlett is the author, coauthor, or coeditor of numerous books and articles, including *Antiwar Dissent and Peace Activism in World War I America: A Documentary Reader* and *The American Peace and Justice Movement from the Early Twentieth Century to the Present*.

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Prologue

Discusses Dewey's December 7, 1941, speech at Carnegie Hall as a prelude to his concern for world peace and then takes a look back at the events of World War I and how he felt about philosophy and war

1. Roots of a Social Critic in the Democratic Tradition

Narrates his very early childhood during the Civil War and its personal effects on his psyche; relates the impact of Social Gospel ideology on his views about industrialization; looks at his work with Jane Addams at Hull House

2. Idealism Discredited: World War I

Extensively discusses his philosophical support for World War I; criticisms by his chief wartime critic, Randolph Bourne; his subsequent disillusionment leading to his interest in the evolving "modern" American peace movement, one that tied social and economic issues to war; and his appreciation for pacifist ideals though never proclaiming to be a pacifist (he was a pacifist—one who opposes war but will accept it only when justice and humanity are in peril)

3. Democracy's Ambassador to the Orient

Explores Dewey's trip to the Far East in the aftermath of postwar reactionary events and how he attempted to reconstruct his philosophy in favor of internationalism, including his views on the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference

4. Education for Peace, Not Military Training

Examines Dewey's views on peace education and his involvement in the battles between the Committee on Militarism in Education and supporters of the Reserve Officers Training Program after the war

5. Outlawing War and the Politics of Peace

Thoroughly explicates Dewey's role in the Outlawry of War movement, his philosophical rationale, and his differences with critics such as journalist Walter Lippmann; why he was disappointed that the Kellogg-Briand Treaty did not fulfill his hopes; and how the politics of diplomacy sidetracked his intellectual rationalizations

6. Slide toward Another World War

Shows how Dewey, the "peaceful socialist," sought a more active role in politics to address the enormity of the Great Depression and how he linked his involvement in the peace movement to challenge advocates of class warfare; discusses his differences with former pacifist and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's socialist acceptance of violence to address economic inequalities and communist critics; and ends with Dewey still holding out hope against going to war

7. Time of Hesitation Over, the Future Uncertainty

Discusses Dewey's views and opinions regarding his somber support for World War II and how he continued to press for some form of internationalism in the name of world peace

Epilogue

Summarizes Dewey's contributions to peace, examines his fall from grace by academicians and social critics in the 1950s, and explores how Dewey's ideas can still be useful to peace education today