“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’s John Dewey, America’s Peace-Minded Educator helps 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, SUNY-Albany

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

One of America’s preeminent educational philosophers and public intellectuals, 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 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. Exploring Dewey’s use of pragmatic philosophy to build a consensus for world peace, Howlett and Cohan illuminate a previously neglected aspect of his contributions to American political and social thought and remind us of the importance of creating a culture of peace through educational awareness.

Charles F. Howlett, a professor of education at Molloy College, is a coeditor of Antiwar Dissent and Peace Activism in World War I America: A Documentary Reader and the author, coauthor, or coeditor of seven other books and numerous articles.

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$45, 6 x 9, 328 pages, 15 illus.
Prologue:
Discusses Dewey's Dec. 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.

Chapter One: Roots 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.

Chapter Two: Idealism Discredited
An extensive discussion of his philosophical support for WW1; criticisms by his chief wartime critic, Randolph Bourne; his subsequent disillusionment leading to his interest in the evolving “modern” American peace movement, a movement which tied social and economic issues to war; and his appreciation for pacifist ideals though never proclaiming to be a pacifist (he was a Pacifiscist—one who opposes war but will accept when justice and humanity are in peril, only).

Chapter Three: 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.

Chapter Four: Education for Peace, Not Military Training
Examines Dewey's views on peace education and his involvement in the Committee on Militarism in Education's battles with supporters of the Reserve Officers Training Program after the war.

Chapter Five: Outlawing War and the Politics of Peace
A thorough explication of 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.

Chapter Six: Slide toward Another World War
Dewey, the “peaceful socialist,” seeks 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. This chapter takes into account his differences with former pacifist and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr’s socialist acceptance of violence to address economic inequalities and communist critics. It ends with Dewey’s still holding out hope against going to war.

Chapter Seven: Time of Hesitation Over and Future Uncertainty
Informs readers about 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, along with commentary regarding his fall from grace by academicians and social critics in the 1950s, and then explores how Dewey’s ideas can still be useful to peace education today.