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.
Prologue
Discuss 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 pacificist—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