

Howlett, Charles F.; Lieberman, Robbie: *A History of the American Peace Movement from Colonial Times to the Present*. Lewiston NY: The Edwin Mellen Press 2008. ISBN: 978-0-7734-5092-9; 656 p.

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'A History of the American Peace Movement from Colonial Times to the Present' is a remarkable achievement, surveying the entire history of pacifist organizations and leaders in the United States from the beginning of its history to 2006. Moving chronologically from the original peacemakers of the country (Native Americans) through the religious pacifists of the colonial period to the religious and secular non-violent activists for peace and justice in the nineteenth century, to the myriad of peace and justice initiatives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Howlett and Lieberman provide us with a comprehensive textbook history of the most important people, organizations, and ideas of American peace history. It should be required reading for any student interested in researching any aspect of peace history in the U.S., as it will place any specific peace worker or institution within its broader historical perspective. Indeed, it should be required reading for any specialist in American history because it fills in gaps usually left by history textbooks which focus primarily on wars and violent events, and usually pay little attention to peace movements. It effectively demonstrates how peace movements have always existed in American history, always opposed militarists and those who advocate violence, and effectively pressured for peace and justice at home and abroad. It also clearly shows the important role that non-violent activists for peace and justice have played throughout American history, not only in ending wars and offering peaceful resolutions to conflict, but also in supporting justice movements, such as the women's rights, workers' rights, and African-American civil rights movements.

In addition to providing a necessary corrective to most surveys of American history and documenting the achievements of peace activists, Howlett and Lieberman provide read-

ers with a number of helpful devices. Their glossary of peace terminology is a brief, but useful explanation of key terms used in the text, and their extensive list of notable peacemakers in American history, along with brief descriptions of their contributions, clearly and concisely conveys this important information. The introductory chapter provides a historiographical review and discussion of peace activism in general. More important for peace history researchers is the thorough and well-written bibliographic essay at the end of the book. The hundreds of works on American peace history are organized chronologically and thematically, and provide an excellent starting point for anyone interested in researching any topic in this broad field. The authors additionally provide extensive endnotes for each chapter. While most of these are secondary sources, as is expected of most textbooks, many primary sources are also included, indicating the depth of the research involved in completing a work of this magnitude. In addition to these helpful supplements, the authors consistently write in easy-to-read prose, well-suited to a wide audience.

While all of these features make this textbook a welcome addition to the literature on American history, more advanced peace history researchers may be a bit disappointed in the survey approach to the topic. Like most historical surveys, there is little room for thorough and critical discussions of the material. With over 600 pages of brief discussions of pacifist leaders and organizations, a history of this scope must stick to „just the facts.“ Indeed, the authors do this very well, providing readers with an overview that not only provides general information, but also specifics which reveal the diversity of ideas and personalities behind the American peace movement. This overview approach, which is uncritically laudatory of peace activists, however, leaves us wanting more analysis, more discussion of the mistakes as well as the successes, and more coverage of the local groups and lesser-known activists. Even readers who are new to peace studies may find this overview of facts less than satisfying, as they do with many textbooks. Overviews often overwhelm readers with facts, and little else to keep their attention. Some text-

books try to overcome this with interesting visuals, fonts, and formatting, but Howlett and Lieberman have formatted their textbook like a no-frills monograph, with only a few black and white visuals in the middle of the book.

Despite these minor flaws, 'A History of the American Peace Movement' does provide even the experienced peace researcher with a wealth of information. Every chapter is packed with discussions of the many individuals and organizations which have made up the American peace movement. We learn, for example, of the Quakers' important role in non-violent activism throughout the centuries, the complexities of opposition to the War of 1812, the roles of national peace organizations such as the American Peace Society, opposition to the draft, conscientious objectors in all of the wars, opposition to racial and economic injustice, feminist pacifists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the movement against the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons of the second half of the twentieth century, and the largest antiwar demonstrations of all time which occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century in opposition to the Iraq War. Little-known facts and arguments about the peace movement are interwoven within the broader framework of U.S. history, effectively integrating peace history within its wider context. This is indeed a welcome and essential contribution to the writing of American history.

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