
■ Introduction

Each decade of the twentieth century is closely identified with at least one landmark or major turning point. In the 1910s, two major things stand out—World War I (1914-1918) and the Progressive Era (approximately 1895-1921).

Coverage in this work of World War I focuses on American involvement, how and why the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, U.S. bias against Germany, the Zimmermann telegram, Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare and so much more. No study of the war could ignore the major U.S. battles, such as the Meuse-Argonne offensive, individuals such as Woodrow Wilson, General John J. Pershing, and Sergeants Alvin York, events such as governmental regulations of the economy at the home front, the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles. All these, and more, are discussed in detail.

The Progressive Era was a period of widespread social activism and political reform in the United States that spanned nearly 30 years. The movement targeted issues of industrialization, urbanization, immigration and political corruption, and informed most things that happened during the 1910s. President Woodrow Wilson was one of the major leaders of the progressive movement. President William Howard Taft, who is best described as semi-progressive, pursued some progressive policies, although several were quite conservative, particularly as they related to conservation. President Theodore Roosevelt played an important part in the politics of the 1910s, especially in the presidential election of 1912—one of the most important elections in U.S. history. Other progressive leaders included Senators Robert La Follette and George Norris, in addition to Alice Paul, Upton Sinclair, Herbert Croly, W.E.B. Du Bois, John R. Commons, among many others. The adoption of the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Amendments were all important accomplishments of the progressive movement during the 1910s.

Also significant to the decade were major events and developments such as interventions into Mexico and Russia, completion of the Panama Canal, the rise of socialism and labor unions, advancements in automobiles and aircraft industries, as well as the impor-

tant works of literature, films and other cultural indicators that were part of the 1910s.

Controversy is sure to abound in any work that discusses American history and the 1910s is no exception. The Jim Crow system, now called racial segregation, is a good example. Today, most Americans understand this social system as unjust, and sympathize with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in opposing that system. The articles in this work that deal with Jim Crow attempt to present the facts of what the system was like, not to condemn or condone.

A controversial movie of the decade was *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by David W. Griffith in 1915. The movie takes place in the South following the Civil War, portraying African Americans generally as ignorant and violent, and showed members of the Ku Klux Klan to be the “good guys.” Although controversial even in 1915, many southerners accepted the film as historically accurate, revealing an important piece of early twentieth century culture. It is interesting to compare Griffith's movie with a second film, also called *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by Nate Parker in 2016, which celebrates the life of Nat Turner, the slave who led a rebellion in Virginia in 1831. Described as intelligent and literate, Nat Turner's story, when compared to the earlier film, demonstrates how history can be interpreted to appeal to different audiences.

True Stories

The 1910s in America contains stories about people, events, movements, and developments. Don Hewitt (1922-2009), producer of T.V.'s *60 Minutes*, writes in his memoirs, *Tell Me a Story: Fifty Years and 60 Minutes in Television* (2001): “The formula [for the show's success] is simple, and is reduced to four words every kid in the world knows: Tell me a story. It's that easy.” Certainly, Hewitt is correct about the appeal of stories, but it is not always easy to tell a true story with factual accuracy in a way that is understandable and compelling to the general reader. That, however, is the goal of these volumes.

Consider, for example, the reasons why the Congress and President Wilson enacted the Espionage and Sedition Acts, which punished people for making

statements about the war. Reasons for the Espionage and Sedition Acts included: traditional interpretations of the First Amendment; fear of radical opponents of the war; and concern that opposition to the war might encourage young men to disobey draft laws. Other interesting questions include why the Supreme Court approved the laws, and why did their interpretations of the First Amendment gradually change in subsequent years? Is there a right way and wrong way to interpret the First Amendment? Should the Constitution be interpreted according to “original intent” or according to philosophical theories of justice as fairness? The answers to these questions will help in understanding the articles presented in this work.

Components of a Story

In addition to answering six questions (who, what, when, where, why and how) to help journalists and historians arrive at reasonable ways to interpret a story, historians also think in terms of five C’s:

- **Context:** Every story has a background, which includes events and long-term movements that occurred before the event being written about. For example, why did the Allies, including the U.S., intervene in the Russian civil war? To analyze this complex event, one has to understand the war, Marxist-Leninist ideology, and how Western leaders reacted to that ideology.
- **Complexity:** Every story is based on a multitude of decisions based on individual ideas, moral values, and perceived interests. For example, there were literally millions of decisions that caused the final outcome of World War I. If German officials had not declared unrestricted submarine warfare in early 1917, the U.S. probably would not have entered the war on the side of the Allies.
- **Causation:** Every story is a result of causes, including: impersonal forces; social movements; individual motivations and decisions. For example, why did President Wilson believe in racial segregation? It is true that he was socialized in the South during the age of Jim Crow, but not all white southerners supported racial segregation.

- **Contingency:** Every story includes unexpected events and coincidences. For example, if the German submarine had failed to destroy the *Lu-sitania*, the history of World War I might have turned out differently than it did.
- **Change:** Stories are affected by laws, technologies, scientific knowledge, and dominant cultures, which are constantly changing. For example, in 1919, LGBT behavior was often criminalized because it was assumed—based on religious beliefs and traditions—that such behavior was immoral and pathological. In 2019, the majority of Americans think that the 1919 anti-LGBT legislation violated basic human rights.

Truth in History

If historians and journalists are competent and honest, their goal is to tell a story as it actually happened, attempting to describe the objectively true causes and outcomes of an event at a particular time in the past. Because of human bias, however, there is the universal tendency to tell a story in a way that corresponds to one’s pre-existing expectations. Historians who consider their implicit biases and recognize that their knowledge of a past event is relative, often offer the most honest accounts. Although there are not “alternative facts,” there are “alternative interpretations.” To arrive at the objective truth about is often difficult.

This reference work on the 1910s does not attempt to give definitive conclusions about difficult interpretative questions, but attempts to tell what happened on the basis of widely accepted facts that have been documented by competent historians. From there, researchers can do additional research to learn more.

—Thomas Tandy Lewis

A

■ Abbott, Robert S.

Identification: African American journalist, business executive, lawyer, and activist

Born: November 24, 1868; Frederica, St. Simons Island, Georgia

Died: February 29, 1940; Chicago, Illinois

Robert S. Abbott established The Chicago Defender, a nationally distributed newspaper covering and catering to African Americans, during the first half of the twentieth century. Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal called Abbott the founder of the modern black press. His newspaper encouraged the Great Migration of African Americans out of the rural South to Chicago and other northern industrial cities.

Robert Sengstacke Abbott was born in the town of Frederica on St. Simons Island in Georgia, a barrier island where black residents retained African-oriented Gullah traditions. Abbott's father died when he was an infant. His dark-skinned hairdresser mother, Flora Abbott, married John Sengstacke, a German mulatto. Sengstacke started a four-page newspaper and Abbott, while still a boy, assisted in its production and distribution.

Abbott left coastal Georgia for Hampton Institute in Virginia to study printing. He also sang in a touring group that solicited donations for the college. He earned his degree in 1896, and then returned to Georgia to work at his stepfather's newspapers, *The Woodville Times* and *The Echo*, as a trained printer.

Abbott demonstrated a desire to be successful despite racial slights. He was rejected by the family of his light-complexioned girlfriend because of his dark skin and West African features. Spurned, he left Georgia again for Chicago, where he studied law at Kent College. He earned a degree but was not admitted to the bar. Abbott was told a number of times that law firms would not hire him because of his complexion; that he posed too big a risk of causing

courtroom defeats for partners or clients. In 1904, nevertheless, a political friend found him work inside a Chicago printing house.

Abbott, an ambitious entrepreneur, was determined to create a newspaper of his own. At this time, about forty thousand African Americans were living in Chicago. Even though three black-oriented newspapers circulated in that community, Abbott surveyed the competition and was sure that he could produce a better product. He quit a printing job and rented a room on State Street. With a borrowed card table and chair and \$0.25 he needed for paper and pencils, Abbott sat down and composed *The Chicago Defender*, a four-page circular. The newspaper's name was inspired by Abbott's commitment to defend African Americans. Less than a decade earlier, Jim



Robert S. Abbott

Crow segregation had been formally legalized by the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Abbott published his first edition on May 5, 1905. He obtained credit from a printer in order to make three hundred copies of the paper for a total cost of \$13.75. He then personally sold his two-cent weekly door to door. Later that same year, he began to attract paid advertisements that provided revenue necessary in order to continue publishing. During the lean early months, his landlord let the struggling publisher use her dining room as a work space. She also provided meals and let him use her telephone. Years later, when Abbott's newspaper prospered, he bought her an eight-bedroom house.

Abbott's newspaper catered primarily to the interests of black Chicagoans. Lynching and other violence against African Americans was a frequent topic in *The Chicago Defender*. In 1906, when African American soldiers in Brownsville, Texas, were mistreated and they retaliated against the locals, Abbott played up the story prominently. In 1910, Abbott hired his first paid employee, J. Hockley Smiley, an editor with a passion for sensational, muckraking stories.

The Chicago Defender's circulation was aided by the fifty thousand people who migrated to Chicago from the rural South before World War I. Abbott's legacy was that of an activist who strongly urged southern African Americans to drop their plows and cotton field sacks and come north to Chicago for employment in industrial jobs and for freedom from Jim Crow segregation. When the war ended in 1918, African Americans in the Deep South were following *The Chicago Defender's* clarion calls to leave in droves. Between 1910 and 1920, Chicago's black population increased by 148 percent, reaching at least 109,500 people.

Southern whites found the messages of *The Chicago Defender* to be a national threat, and some even warned federal agents that they suspected the newspaper was being used by Germans to incite black violence against whites and to be behind the Great Migration. White authorities in many southern towns banned the postal distribution of *The Chicago Defender* and threatened residents with arrest for discussing the newspaper. Abbott reacted by employing black Pullman sleeping car porters who clandestinely distributed the newspapers at railroad stops.

Not only did Abbott encourage African Americans to migrate north, but he also urged them to fight for their civil rights after they arrived there. During and immediately after World War I, *The Chicago Defender* also campaigned for better treatment of black soldiers, who often were harassed and menaced by racist whites. Abbott published nine goals for the newspaper's Bible:

1. American race prejudice must be destroyed;
2. Opening up all trade unions to blacks as well as whites;
3. Representation in the President's Cabinet'
4. Hiring black engineers, firemen, and conductors on all American railroads, and to all jobs in government;
5. Gaining representation in all departments of the police forces over the entire United States;
6. Government schools giving preference to American citizens before foreigners;
7. Hiring black motormen and conductors on surface, elevated, and motor bus lines throughout America;
8. Federal legislation to abolish lynching; and
9. Full enfranchisement of all American citizen.

By the time of the First World War, *The Chicago Defender* was recognized as the national voice for African Americans, and it was one of the best sources in the country to obtain the black perspective on the news. It provided first-hand coverage of incidents such as the Red Summer Riots of 1919, the violent series of race riots in numerous parts of the country. The paper campaigned for national anti-lynching laws and for integrated sports. Its columnists included black leaders such as Langston Hughes and Walter White.

Abbott called *The Chicago Defender* "The World's Greatest Weekly," a play on the daily *Chicago Tribune's* slogan, "The World's Greatest Newspaper." Abbott's *Defender* played contrarian to another leading black publication, *The Crisis*, edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, who famously said a "talented tenth" of black elites should lead the masses. Abbott countered that the masses, not the upper classes, should lead.

National circulation of *The Chicago Defender* grew steadily. By 1916, eleven years after its inception, the newspaper had a circulation of 50,000, and by 1920 its circulation had reached about 283,571. The

publisher at that time had the revenue to purchase a \$500,000 printing plant that he racially integrated. Abbott employed a white foreman and white salesmen in addition to numerous African Americans. When the Great Depression reduced circulation to 73,000 in 1935, Abbott subsidized his newspaper with \$250,000 and kept it publishing.

Newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst obtained an injunction against Abbott, claiming that the owl design in *The Chicago Defender's* nameplate infringed on *The Chicago American's* eagle logo. Between editions, Abbott replaced the owl with a sphinx and continued publishing. In 1921, Abbott and David Kellum invented the fictional character “Bud Billiken” in a special section for young readers. They then established the Bud Billiken Club, and this was later expanded into the annual Bud Bullken Parade and Picnic, an occasion for African Americans in Chicago to celebrate their racial cultural pride and at the same time promote education. In the twenty-first century, the event continued as the largest African American parade in the nation.

Impact

The Chicago Defender was the first black newspaper to have a circulation of over 100,000. It was also the first to have a health column and a full page of comic strips. In addition to informing, entertaining, and rallying readers to action, Abbott's paper helped relocating southern African Americans become acclimated to urban life. The newspaper printed letters from migrants searching for jobs and places to live and schooled bewildered newcomers on appropriate conduct in the big city. Tens of thousands of African Americans heeded *The Chicago Defender's* counsel, and southerners continued to pour into Chicago. After World War I, an additional 100,000 people arrived in the city and settled primarily on the South Side, which was dubbed the “Black Metropolis” by authors St. Claire Drake and Horace R. Cayton.

Abbott played a decisive role in reshaping a city demographically, not unlike several generations of the Chandler family, who invented modern Los Angeles by using their *Los Angeles Times* to recruit Midwesterners and convert a former goat-herding village into an affluent metropolis. Furthermore, *The Chicago Defender* was one of a trio of outstanding

nationally circulated black newspapers that prospered during the early to midtwentieth century. *The Chicago Defender's* peers were the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Afro-American* of Baltimore.

Abbott groomed his nephew John H. Sengstacke, son of Abbott's brother Alexander, to take over *The Chicago Defender*. In 1939, Abbott willed two thirds of his estate to his nephew; the remaining third went to his second wife. He died on February 29, 1940, during the week his nephew convened a summit of twenty black newspaper owners.

Wayne Dawkins

Updated by Thomas Tandy Lewis

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See also: Du Bois, W.E.B.; Garvey, Marcus; Great Northern Migration of African Americans; Jim Crow.

■ Abrams V. United States

Identification: Federal legislation

Citation: 250 U.S. 616

Announced: November 10, 1919

Issue: Freedom of speech and press under the First Amendment

The U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 to uphold the constitutionality of the Sedition Act of 1918 and also to uphold the convictions of five Russian anarchists who had published pamphlets that voiced opposition to U.S. involvement in the war and advocated a general strike to prevent U.S. intervention in the Russian revolution. From a long-term perspective, the majority opinion in Abrams v. United States was less significant than the Oliver Wendell Holmes's dissenting opinion, which defended a more libertarian interpretation of free speech under the First Amendment.

The First Amendment specifies that “Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.” The Sedition Act of 1918, which was an amendment to the Espionage Act of 1917, made it a crime to “willfully utter, print, write, or publish any disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language” about the U.S. system of government, or to “willfully urge, incite, or advocate any curtailment of production” of the things “necessary or essential to the prosecution of the war.” Under the two federal statutes, approximately 2,000 people were prosecuted for their speech, and of these, more than 877 were convicted and given prison sentences between 1918 and 1920. The Supreme Court had to decide whether these prosecutions and convictions violated the constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press.

Jacob “Jack” Abrams, an immigrant from Russia, was well-educated and an excellent organizer. He was a leading member of the Jewish anarchist-communist movement, and served as the editor of the underground Yiddish newspaper titled *Frayhayt* (or *Freedom*). In August 1918, the police arrested Abrams and six of his associates who had helped him print anti-war flyers. They had printed the material in a New York City basement rented by Abrams. The group was caught because one member threw two leaflets out of a fourth-floor window in New York. One leaflet, signed “revolutionaries,” denounced the sending of U.S. troops to Soviet Russia. The second,

written in Yiddish, decried participation in the war and called for a general strike to stop the production of weapons to be used against the Soviet regime.

In March 1919, while Abrams and associates were out on bail, the Supreme Court announced three decisions—*Schenck v. United States*, *Debs v. United States*, and *Frohwerk v. United States*—in which the justices unanimously confirmed the convictions of anti-war activists for violating the Espionage Act of 1917. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the opinions for the Court in all three cases, explaining in *Schenck* that the question in such circumstances “is whether the words used are used in such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.” In this trilogy of cases, Holmes combined the clear-and-present-danger standard with the bad tendency test and also with common-law precedents.

One of the Russian anarchists died of the Spanish flu before the trial. When Abrams and the five others were tried in federal court, one of the defendants was acquitted. Abrams and the four others were found guilty of inciting resistance to the war effort and of urging cessation of production of essential war materials. Abrams and two of his associates were sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment with hard labor and fined \$1,000. The other three were given prison sentences between 3 and 15 years. The five defendants appealed their convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the resulting case, *Abrams v. United States*, the Court upheld the convictions of the anarchists by a 7-2 vote, finding that their advocacy for opposition against U.S. military policies was not protected by the First Amendment. The seven justices in the majority accepted Congress’s determination that all such propaganda posed a danger to the war effort. Writing the opinion for the Court, Justice John H. Clarke followed Holmes’ example in the *Schenck* case and based his argument on the clear-and-present-danger standard. He explained: “This is not an attempt to bring about a change of administration by candid discussion...the manifest purpose of such a publication was to create an attempt to defeat the war plans of the government of the United States, by bringing upon the country the paralysis of a general strike, thereby arresting the production of all munitions and other things essential to the conduct of the war.”

But Holmes, joined by Louis Brandeis, wrote a dissenting opinion. Holmes had modified his thinking since writing the majority opinions in the trilogy of *Schenck*, *Debs*, and *Frohwerk*. He apparently was disturbed by the repression resulting from anti-radical hysteria, and he had also been influenced by four liberal friends: Justice Louis Brandeis, Harvard Professor Zechariah Chaffee, Judge Learned Hand, and political theorist Harold Laski.

In his famous dissent, Holmes significantly changed the wording of the standard that he had used in *Schenck*. The reformulated language was the following: “the United States constitutionally may punish speech that produces or is intended to produce a clear and imminent danger that it will bring about forthwith certain substantive evils that the United States constitutionally may seek to prevent.” Recognizing that “the power undoubtedly is greater in time of war than in time of peace,” he cautioned that “we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions...unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purpose of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country.”

Using this criterion, Holmes found that the ideas in the two leaflets did not provide adequate justification to imprison the five anarchists, who were simply expressing a point of view. These authors of the leaflets were primarily objecting to the U.S. intervention into the Russian civil war, and they did not give any evidence of intent “to cripple or hinder the United States in the prosecution of the war” against Germany, which was the concern in the Sedition and Espionage acts. Holmes insisted that “nobody can suppose that the surreptitious publishing of a silly leaflet by an unknown man, without more, would present any immediate danger that its opinions would hinder the success of the government arms or have any appreciable tendency to do so.”

In addition, Holmes emphasized the crucial importance of free speech in the “marketplace of ideas.” He explained: “The best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and

The HYPOCRISY of the UNITED STATES AND HER ALLIES

”Our” President Wilson with his beautiful phraseology, has hypnotized the people of America to such an extent that they do not see his hypocrisy.

Know, you people of America, that a frank enemy is always preferable to a concealed friend. When we say the people of America, we do not mean the few Kaisers of America, we mean the “People of America.” You people of America were deceived by the wonderful speeches of the masked President Wilson. His shameful cowardly silence about the intervention in Russia reveals the hypocrisy of the plutocratic gang in Washington and vicinity.

The President was afraid to announce to the American People the intervention in Russia. He is too much of a coward to come out openly and say: “We capitalistic nations cannot afford to have a proletarian republic in Russia.” Instead, he uttered beautiful phrases about Russia, which, as you see, he did not mean, and secretly, cowardly, sent troops to crush the Russian Revolution. Do you see how German militarism combined with Allied capitalism to crush the Russian revolution?

This is not new. The tyrants of the world fight each other until they see a common enemy—WORKING CLASS—ENLIGHTENMENT as soon as they find a common enemy they combine to crush it.

In 1815 monarchic nations combined under the name of the “Holy Alliance” to crush the French Revolution. Now militarism and capitalism combined, though not openly, to crush the Russian revolution.

What have you to say about it? Will you allow the Russian Revolution to be crushed? Yes, we mean you the people of America! The Russian Revolution calls to the workers of the World for Help.

The Russian Revolution cries: “WORKERS OF THE WORLD! AWAKE! RISE! PUT DOWN YOUR ENEMY AND MINE!”

Yes, friends, there is only one enemy of the workers of the world and that is CAPITALISM.

It is a crime that workers of America, workers of Germany, workers of Japan, etc. [have] to fight the WORKERS’ REPUBLIC OF RUSSIA.

AWAKE! AWAKE YOU WORKERS OF THE WORLD!
Revolutionists

Source: in Richard Polenberg, *The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 49-50.

that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out.” The Russian anarchists, he insisted, had as much right to publish their ideas in two leaflets as the U.S. government “has to publish the Constitution.”

Impact

Holmes’ dissent was the first instance of a Supreme Court justice advocating that a criminal conviction should be overturned because of the First Amendment. Although Holmes’ libertarian arguments in *Abrams* appear to be quite different from his lower standard for free speech in *Schenck*, *Debs*, and *Frohwerk*, he claimed to have adhered to the same standard of protected speech in all four cases. He concluded that the defendants in the three earlier cases had presented more of an immediate threat to successfully defeating the enemy in a war declared by Congress. Most scholars, however, find that Holmes did significantly modify his interpretation of the First Amendment in the *Abrams* dissent, which eventually had an enormous impact on the development of a libertarian understanding of the constitutional right to protest and criticize governmental policies.

Years later, in *Yates v. United States* (1958), the Supreme Court would endorse a standard similar to the one that Holmes expressed in his *Abrams* dissent. Then in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1968), the Supreme Court would further liberalize that standard when it held that government can only punish speech that is “directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action.” However, in *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project* (2010), when the facts were somewhat similar to those in *Abrams*, the majority of the justices appeared to endorse Holmes’ earlier and more conservative views, holding that the First Amendment allows the government to punish individuals and groups providing legal advice and legal services to terrorist organizations.

Jacob Abrams and two of his associates spent two years in a federal prison in Atlanta. Their lawyer worked out a deal for their release on condition that they were deported to Russia, and they left the U.S.

on the SS *Estonia* on November 24, 1921. For two years, Abrams worked for a printing house in Moscow. The Soviet government, however, strongly opposed his anarcho-syndicalist ideology, and in 1923, he and other anarchists were deported to Berlin, Germany. Three years later, he moved to Mexico, where he joined a group of Spanish anarchist exiles. A chain smoker, he died of throat cancer at the age of 67 in 1953.

Thomas Tandy Lewis

Further Reading

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See Also: Brandeis, Louis; Espionage Act of 1917; Holmes, Oliver Wendell; Sedition Act of 1918; *Schenck v. United States*.

■ Addams, Jane

Identification: Often called the “mother of social work,” Jane Adams was an activist, educator, and opponent of war

Born: September 6, 1860; Cedarville, Illinois

Died: May 21, 1935; Chicago, Illinois

Jane Addams was cofounder and director of Hull House, which was a settlement house that provided services to immigrants and poor people in Chicago. A prominent leader of the Progressive Movement, she promoted a variety of governmental reforms designed to facilitate rational adjustments to the changes taking place in urban, industrial America from 1890 to 1935. A dedicated advocate of settling international disputes through peaceful means, she was one of the most outspoken opponents of U.S. involvement in the First World War. Addams was also the author of eleven books and hundreds of articles.

Jane Addams, the eighth of nine children, was born into a wealthy family of Quaker background. She was a member of the first generation of American women to attend college. In 1881, she graduated from Rockford Female Seminary, in Illinois, which the following year became Rockford College for Women. She then studied medicine for one year at the Women’s Medical College of Philadelphia, but she had to suspend her studies because of poor health, chronic back pain, and severe depression.

In 1888, Addams and her companion, Ellen Gates Starr, visited London’s original settlement house of Toynbee Hall, which had been established four years earlier. The visit led the two women to establish the Chicago settlement house of Hull House in 1889; it was the second such house to be established in America. Through Hull House, Addams found a vocation for the remainder her adult life. It became America’s best-known settlement house, dedicated primarily to tasks of providing educational, recreational, and other services to recent immigrants and needy people. It was also a place used to generate systemic social improvement by means of non-violent reforms.

The charter said that Hull House’s purpose was “To provide a center for higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and to investigate and improve the conditions of the industrial districts of Chicago.” Hull House provided basic educational services and



Jane Addams in 1914 (Wikimedia Commons)

temporary housing for homeless families. Sometimes Addams defended local residents who appeared to be falsely accused of crimes, and at other times she became involved in political elections. At the height of its work, an average of a thousand persons came to the House each week.

Addams began Hull House with money from her own inheritance. However, even if she did not need to ask for money initially, she did not have the necessary funds to pay for all the institution’s activities once it was in progress. She always understood, therefore, that one of her major tasks was to raise money. In addition to raising money, Hull House had to rely on donated services in order to operate. Enthusiastic middle-class persons who wanted to work at Hull House were generally required to voluntarily work without compensation and to pay for their own room and board.

Addams campaigned for every major reform issue of the Progressive Era, such as fairer workplace conditions for men and women, tenement regulations, juvenile-court law, women’s suffrage, and women’s rights. She worked closely with social workers, politicians, and labor and immigrant groups to achieve

her purposes, and she was not afraid to take controversial stances, as when she decided to campaign against US entry into World War I. While in the first part of her life Addams was mainly involved in social work in Hull House, in the twentieth century she used her notoriety to advance political causes and became a well-known public figure. In 1910, she was the first woman president of the National Conference of Social Work, and is widely recognized as the main founder of the social work profession in the United States.

Addams' essay on women's suffrage, "Why Women Should Vote," published as an editorial in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in January 1910, inscribes itself in the intense debate on the topic that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century in America. The women's movement was a crucial part of Progressivism, and one of its most pressing questions was how women could attain equality with men and reform a society dominated by them.

Most women's rights advocates claimed that voting was essential for women to achieve their reformist

Jane Addams on "Why Women Should Vote"

For many generations it has been believed that woman's place is within the walls of her home, and it is indeed impossible to imagine the time when her duty there shall be ended or to forecast any social change which shall release her from that paramount obligation....

The more extensively the modern city endeavors on the one hand to control and on the other hand to provide recreational facilities for its young people the more necessary it is that women should assist in their direction and extension. After all, a care for wholesome and innocent amusement is what women have for many years assumed. When the reaction comes on the part of tax-payers, women's votes may be necessary to keep the city to its bene cent obligations toward its own young people....

Ever since steam power has been applied to the processes of weaving and spinning woman's traditional work has been carried on largely outside of the home. The clothing and household linen are not only spun and woven, but also usually sewed, by machinery; the preparation of many foods has also passed into the factory and necessarily a certain number of women have been obliged to follow their work there, although it is doubtful, in spite of the large numbers of factory girls, whether women now are doing as large a proportion of the world's work as they used to do. Because many thousands of those working in factories and shops are girls between the ages of fourteen and twenty-two there is a necessity that older women should be interested in the conditions of industry. The very fact that these girls are not going to remain in industry permanently makes it more important that someone should see to it that they shall not be incapacitated for their future family life because they work for exhausting hours and under insanitary conditions....

To turn the administration of our civic affairs wholly over to men may mean that the American city will continue to push forward in its commercial and industrial development, and continue to lag behind in those things which make a city healthful and beautiful. After all, woman's traditional function has been to make her dwelling-place both clean and fair. Is that dreariness in city life, that lack of domesticity which the humblest farm dwelling presents, due to a withdrawal of one of the naturally cooperating forces? If women have in any sense been responsible for the gentler side of life which softens and blurs some of its harsher conditions, may they not have a duty to perform in our American cities?

In closing, may I recapitulate that if woman would fulfill her traditional responsibility to her own children; if she would educate and protect from danger factory children who must find their recreation on the street; if she would bring the cultural forces to bear upon our materialistic civilization; and if she would do it all with the dignity and directness fitting one who carries on her immemorial duties, then she must bring herself to the use of the ballot—that latest implement for self-government. May we not fairly say that American women need this implement in order to preserve the home?

Essay of 1910, in *Defining Documents in American History: The 1910s* (Salem Press/Grey House, 2916), pp. 245-46.

goals. Addams shared this belief. Yet, contrary to other women's rights campaigners, she rooted her support for female suffrage within the values of domesticity. While many within the movement argued that suffrage would be instrumental in helping women move beyond the narrow boundaries of the home, Addams begins her essay by situating women's place firmly within the home. She finds that no social change will release women from their domestic obligations. However, for women to fulfill such obligations, it is crucial that they can vote so that they can "take part in the slow up-building of that code of legislation which is alone sufficient to protect the home from the dangers incident to modern life."

She was an enthusiastic supporter of the Progressive Party, and in 1912 she delivered the nomination speech for Theodore Roosevelt—the first time that a woman gave the nomination speech at a party convention. That year, she actively campaigned for Roosevelt, even though she disagreed with the party platform's advocacy for building more battleships. Addams was also a founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In conjunction with her antiwar efforts, she attracted much controversy when she gave a speech at Carnegie Hall in 1915, in which she opposed U.S. intervention into the war then raging in Europe and condemned war as a cataclysm that inevitably caused great carnage and undermined human welfare, kindness, and solidarity. That same year, she became the president of the Woman's Peace Party in 1915 and chaired the International Women's Congress for Peace and Freedom at The Hague, Netherlands. That congress led to the foundation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which Addams chaired until 1929, when she was made honorary president for the remainder of her life.

Impact

Addams' legacy is based on two legacies: Hull House and the Peace Movement. Her work focused on the development of individuals and strong families, and for her benevolent work, she was called "Miss Kind Heart," "Angel of Democracy," the "Lady of God," and "Saint Jane." Her ideas have continued to influence social, political and economic reform in the United States as well as other countries. Addams and Starr's creation of Hull House had a great impact on the Chicago community, immigrant residents, and the

emerging profession of social work. Since that time, she has been both an inspiration and a role model for aspiring social activists.

During World War I, Americans were not unanimous in their praise for Addams's campaigning for peace. On the contrary, she was bitterly attacked and called a "traitor," "unpatriotic," and sometimes "the most dangerous woman in America." and was expelled from the Daughters of the American Revolution. However, her antiwar efforts gained popularity in subsequent years, and she shared the Nobel Peace Prize of 1931 with Nicholas Murray Butler. Because of her declining health, unfortunately, she was unable to collect the prize in person. She died in Chicago on May 21, 1935, three days after being diagnosed with cancer. Addams's life, speeches, and writings are rather typical of middle-class reformers at the turn of the century. She was widely acknowledged as a pioneer social worker, and she spoke vigorously in favor of social reform. Her addresses and public interventions show her to have been idealistic yet committed to concrete action.

Like other Progressive thinkers, such as John Dewey, Herbert Croly, Walter Lippmann, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Addams was deeply concerned with the changing nature of human ties and the meaning of community in an increasingly industrialized and urbanized world. Taking a critical stance toward the quasi laissez-faire capitalism that had characterized the Gilded Age, a period of excessive displays of wealth in the late nineteenth century, progressive activists like Addams expanded the authority of government to deal with major societal problems such as poverty, and lack of education. They charged the state with the task of intervening in social and economic matters whenever appropriate, in an attempt to overcome selfish interests in the name of the common good. In the twenty-first century, she is often remembered as one of the early American proponents of democratic socialism.

*Ashleigh Fata, Luca Prono, and Richard G. Frederick
Updated by Thomas Tandy Lewis*

Further Reading

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House with Autobiographical Notes*. New York: Macmillan, 1910. A good source for understanding Addams and the Progressive reform movement, as the book is a combination of autobiography, publicity for Hull House, and summary of the progressive movement.

- Davis, Allen F. *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973. A balanced biography that gives a realistic appraisal of her accomplishments.
- Elshtain, Jean B., ed. *The Jane Addams Reader*. New York: Basic Books, 2002. A very good introduction followed by a collection of many of her essays and other writings.
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- Fradin, Judith B., and Dennis B. Fradin. *Jane Addams: Champion of Democracy*. New York: Clarion, 2006. A compelling and concise narrative written by two admirers of Addams.
- Hamilton, Maurice, ed. *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams*. University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2010. A collection of very interesting articles about various aspects of his thought and actions.
- Harvey, Bonnie C. *Jane Addams: Social Worker and Nobel Peace Winner*. New Jersey: Enslow Pub., Inc., 2015. An admiring portrait that is brief and easy to read.
- Joslin, Katherine. *Jane Addams: A Writer's Life*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004. Joslin argues that Addams's emergence as a public figure stemmed from her books and essays, written in a style that appealed to a wide readership.
- Knight, Louise W. *Jane Adams: Spirit in Action*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012. Thesis that "she increasingly thought for herself, released her own spirit, and working with others, accomplished remarkable things."
- Levine, Daniel. *Jane Addams and the Liberal Tradition*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971. An intellectual biography of Addams, which asserts that she was a radical in urging rapid change.
- Linn, James Weber. *Jane Addams: A Biography*. New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1935. An admiring and comprehensive biography by Addams's nephew who knew her and also had access to all of her manuscripts and files prior to her death.

Stebner, Eleanor J. *The Women of Hull House: A Study in Spirituality, Vocation, and Friendship*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997. Stebner finds that the women of Hull House were both humanists and religious or spiritual.

See also: Paul, Alice; Progressive movement; Roosevelt, Theodore; Women's suffrage movement.

■ Adler, Felix

Identification: German-born social reformer, ethical philosopher, and university professor

Born: August 13, 1851; Alzey, Hesse-Darmstadt (now in Germany)

Died: April 24, 1933; New York, New York

As the founder of Society for Ethical Culture, Adler was an internationally recognized public intellectual, who articulated a philosophy based on universal religious teachings. He served as a social reformer, establishing a network of schools, working with labor leaders, and improving New York City housing.

Felix Adler was born in Germany to Henrietta and Samuel Adler. The family moved to New York City in 1857 when Samuel, a distinguished rabbi, accepted a post at Temple Emanu-El. In New York, Felix Adler attended Columbia Grammar School, while also receiving formal Jewish instruction from his parents and supplemental classes. He enrolled at Columbia College and graduated in 1870, with an associate bachelor's degree. He then traveled to Germany for his graduate studies, and obtained a doctoral degree in Semitics from Heidelberg University. While in Germany, he was influenced by the ideas of Immanuel Kant and other philosophers. Gradually he rejected the orthodox Jewish faith and adopted a universalistic understanding of religion, which ultimately guided his professional endeavors.

Upon returning to America, expected to fill his father's post, Adler delivered a sermon during which he neglected to mention God. Consequently, he was not offered the job and instead began work at Cornell University in the spring of 1874. Despite his academic post, Adler desired a platform outside the university to comment on religion and social issues. Accordingly, on May 15, 1876, Adler and a handful of

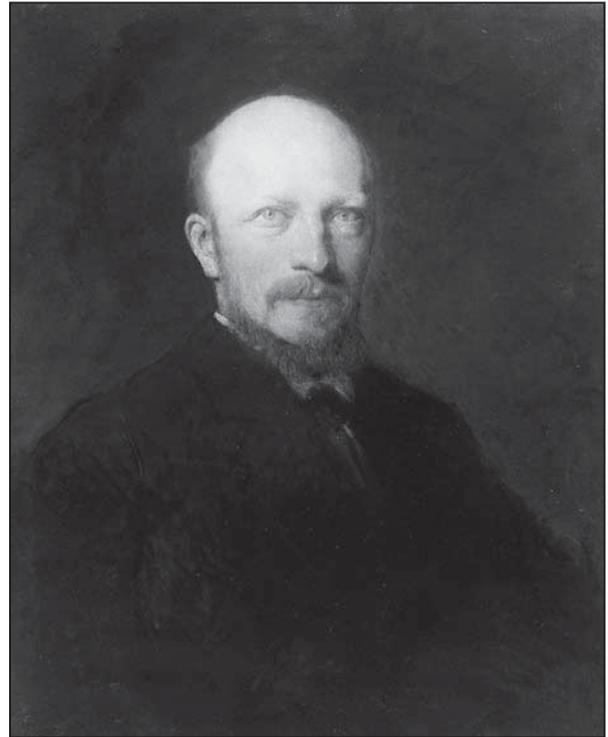
associates founded the Society for Ethical Culture, for which Adler served as the head until he died. In 1880, he married Helen (Nellie) Godmark. Together they had five children: Waldo, Eleanor, Lawrence, Margaret, and Ruth. (Helen's sister was the wife of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis.)

Adler initially used the Society for Ethical Culture as a forum to articulate his ideas about religion and current events, especially economic and social ills, which he discussed in weekly lectures delivered on Sunday mornings. Although not a socialist, he recognized the inequitable distribution of wealth as problematic. Instead of promoting specifically Jewish religious values, he advanced what he identified as basic principles shared by all religions. Adler advocated that religious practices be aimed at furthering the well-being of society as a collective. Promoting his understanding of such universal ideals, Adler served as the president of the Free Religious Association from 1878 to 1882.

In an effort to remedy social ills, Adler also used the society as a vehicle to implement his ideas; two of his first initiatives included sending nurses to the homes of sick people and establishing New York City's first free kindergarten. The success of Adler's kindergarten programs enabled him to establish schools that served students through high school. Adopting the name Ethical Culture Schools in 1895, these institutions were unique because they reflected Adler's personal belief in the importance of both intellectual development and manual training. He aimed to prepare students to succeed in an industrialized economy and to inculcate in them curiosity and reasoning skills. Adler placed history at the center of his curriculum, underlining his belief in human agency.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Ethical Culture societies had spread throughout the United States and abroad. Branches were operating in Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Louis, as well as in London, Cambridge, and Vienna, among other places. Although each branch operated independently, all promoted similar ideas.

In many respects, Adler's educational views complemented those of philosopher and educational specialist John Dewey. The two became colleagues when Adler joined the faculty of Columbia, in 1902, as the professor of political and social ethics, a position he held until 1921. Adler also held various



Felix Adler in 1914 (Wikimedia Commons)

positions abroad, for example, serving as the Theodore Roosevelt Exchange Professor at the University of Berlin in 1908 and earning appointment as the Hibbert Lecturer at Oxford University in 1924. In 1904, Adler helped to establish and to lead the National Child Labor Commission. Further, he participated in reformation of city housing problems, serving on the New York State Tenement House Commission, and his ideas helped shape the city's efforts at prison reform.

Adler was also a strong supporter of First Amendment rights for the freedoms of speech and press. In 1917, he served on the Civil Liberties Bureau, which later became the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). For several years he served as president of the Eastern division of the American Philosophical Association and on the executive board of the National Urban League.

When Adler was asked if he was an atheist, he answered, "I am a biped and an agnostic." He observed that the existence of one or more deities cannot be either proven or disproven. He added: It is no longer necessary to make men religious to make them

“Ethical Outlook,” By Felix Adler

- The right for the right’s sake is the motto which everyone should take for his own life. With that as a standard of value we can descend into our hearts, appraise ourselves, and determine in how far we already are moral beings, in how far not yet.
- The supremacy of the moral end of life above all other ends, the sufficiency of man for the pursuit of that end, the increase of moral truth to be expected from loyalty in this pursuit—these are the three tenets, if we may call them so, of an ethical creed....
- Ethical religion affirms the continuity of progress toward moral perfection. It affirms that the spiritual development of the human race cannot be prematurely cut off, either gradually or suddenly; that every stone of offence against which we stumble is a stepping-stone to some greater good; that, at the end of days, if we choose to put it so, all the rays of progress will be summed and centered in a transcendent focus....
- That the moral obligation remains in force is the capital fact to which we must hold fast, no matter what may be our theories of life and the Universe. The recognition of this obligation, the hearty avowal of the supremacy of the moral end above all other ends of life, is the first article of a practical ethical creed.
- There may be, and there ought to be, progress in the moral sphere. The moral truths which we have inherited from the past need to be expanded and re-stated.
- In times of misfortune we require for our support something of which the truth is beyond all question, in which we can put an implicit trust, “though the heavens should fall.” A merely borrowed belief is, at such time, like a rotten plank across a raging torrent. The moment we step upon it, it gives way beneath our feet.
- Good deeds remain good, no matter whether we know how the world was made or not. Vile deeds are vile, no matter whether we know or do not know what, after death, will be the fate of the doer. We know, at least, what his fate is now, namely, to be wedded to the vileness.
- There is a universal element in man which he can assert by so acting as if the purpose of the Universe were also his purpose. It is the function of the supreme ordeals of life to develop in men this power, to give to their life this distinction, this height of dignity, these vast horizons.
- Life has ever seemed to me a task. It has its interludes of joy. But, on the whole, it is an arduous, often a desperately arduous task. I think of the dead as of those who have finished their task, who have graduated from this exacting school, who have taken their degree—and some of them, surely, with honour.
- We need to feel that no effort is ever wasted, that no honest reaching out toward the good is vain, that the great All is pressing forward toward a transcendent goal. And there is but a single way to obtain this conviction. It is not possible to enter into the nature of the Good by standing aloof from it—by merely speculating upon it. Act the Good, and you will believe in it. Throw yourself into the stream of the world’s good tendency and you will feel the force of the current and the direction in which it is setting. The conviction that the world is moving toward great ends of progress will come surely to him who is himself engaged in the work of progress.
- By ceaseless efforts to live the good life we maintain our moral sanity. Not from without, but from within, flow the divine waters that renew the soul.
- The ethical element of religion has ever been its truly vital and quickening force. It is this which lends such majesty to the speeches of the Prophets, which gives such ineffable power and sweetness to the words of Jesus. Has this ethical element become less important in our age? Has the need of accentuating it become less imperative?

Excerpts from chapter, “Ethical Outlook,” in *Life and Destiny* (1913)

moral. Morality can stand on its own feet.” He was strongly opposed to the practice of indoctrination. While he said that he believed “that Ethical Societies should operate on democratic principles,” he nevertheless insisted that the societies would have “no official philosophy because as a movement, we have no desire to impose the convictions of some on others.”

Adler held that it was important to “disentangle moral ideas from religious doctrines, metaphysical systems, and ethical theories, and to make them an independent force in personal life and social relations.” He was particularly critical of the religious emphasis on creeds, because he was convicted that such creeds were the source of conflict and intolerance. Yet, he emphasized the importance of tolerating differences, even when beliefs might be considered harmful. His goal, therefore, was for the ethical societies to provide a universal fellowship for people of differing religious and philosophical views.

Adler was the author of numerous texts, which detailed his philosophy and ideas about ethics and ways to solve various problems. Such works include *The Religion of Duty* (1905), *Life and Destiny* (1913), *Marriage and Divorce* (1915), the *World Crisis and Its Meaning* (1915), and *An Ethical Philosophy of Life* (1918), *The Punishment of Children* (1920), among others. In addition to books, he published a large number of articles, such as “Child Labor A Menace to Civilization,” in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July 1, 1911).

In addition to expressing opinions about domestic developments, Adler held a range of positions about American foreign policy. His life paralleled the rise of American presence abroad, a development that, for the most part, Adler denounced. Although he initially supported the participation of the United States in the Spanish-American War, he came to criticize American action before the war’s end, reflecting his general anti-imperialist stance. However, exhibiting American messianic fervor, Adler also believed that Americans—as humans, not as patriots—had a certain responsibility to help people in “uncivilized” societies.

During World War I, Adler disagreed with the notion that the defeat of the German Empire would make the world safe for democracy. Rather, he maintained that peace depended on representative democratic governments. He was a strong supporter of limitations on armaments. Yet, he did not support the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations. As

an alternative proposal, Adler proposed a “Parliament of Parliaments”, to be elected by the legislative bodies of the different nations and representing different classes of people. Most experts on international relations considered his vision to be utopian and did not think it had any realistic chance of success.

After a brief unidentified illness, Adler died on April 24, 1933, at the age of eighty-two, at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. The institution he founded survived his death and continued in operation.

Impact

Adler’s significance flows from his role as a public intellectual and social reformer. Adler’s career, in which he established schools, reformed various social institutions, and founded the Society of Ethical Culture—an institution that provided a forum for various thinkers to express themselves and collaborate with others—reflected his basic belief in the fundamental value of every individual. Although he rejected Jewish theology as his primary philosophical guide, his life’s work reflected many of the Jewish values instilled in him as a child. As a Jewish thinker, his work and theological transformation represent one way in which Jews responded to the demands of life in America.

Britt P. Tevis

Updated by Thomas Tandy Lewis

Further Reading

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Bridges, Horace James, ed. *Aspects of Ethical Religion: Essays in Honor of Felix Adler on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Ethical Movement, 1876, by his Colleagues*. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1916. Contains some valuable essays in the field of ethical philosophy.

Freiss, Horace L. *Felix Adler and Ethical Culture: Memories and Studies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981. Through personal recollections and