

LP (laughing): That's a great detail: To take something from IKEA and make it into something beautiful.

HG: So it's almost also like doubling this kind of joke on a European cultural context. He was like, oh yeah, I'm gonna make these beautiful trays out of like old badly made Swedish furniture.

LP: *Book of Earth* is beautiful, complex, and incredibly timely, here in the Anthropocene. What would you want readers to come away thinking more deeply about?

HG: I'm very interested in earth empathy. Earth empathy lets you relate to microbial ochre as the living lineage of ancestors that created other beings out of which we've come. You realize that gods are right in front of your face. That you're in a series of origin stories still alive right now. Ochres point us back to teachings about how to connect to ancestral memory, cultural memory. Ochres have deep meanings to me in their ability to both physically remediate landscapes, and also to spiritually remediate our relationship with the earth. ⁴

The Quiet Dr. Einstein and the Forgotten Moral Heroes of World War I

Alberto Martinez and Thomas Palaima

WHAT GOOD IS A TRUE WAR story? How do we tell that it's true? What is truth, in times of war and of social and political unrest? How should citizens behave when their countries are fighting unjustifiable wars? How do they reconcile their inaction with their consciences? Here we will tell a true war story, about Albert Einstein and his close associates during World War I, that may shed light on these questions.

Much has been written about Einstein's pacifism during World War I.¹ It is well-known that he refused to sign the Manifesto of the 93 prominent German intellectuals who supported the war in 1914, including Fritz Haber and Max Planck.² Instead, Einstein soon afterward signed a counter-Manifesto against the war, drafted by Georg Nicolai, a cardiologist in Berlin. Nearly nobody else signed the counter-Manifesto, and it was not even published in Germany.

Years later, when reflecting on his enormous fame, Einstein complained that much of it truly arose from a kind of mass psychosis, and that historians should study

mass psychology in order to understand how one man, such as himself, may become seized by society, almost randomly, and misrepresented as a paragon of genius or virtue.³ Yet Einstein's fans did not believe him, of course, and neither did historians of science. Instead they thought he was just being modest. Not only did they portray Einstein as one of the greatest geniuses in physics, they also portrayed him as a great pacifist. To be sure, from an early age Einstein despised militarism, and German militarism in particular. But, as we shall see, he was not a great pacifist during World War I. In many ways Einstein's behavior serves as a parable for what intelligent individuals of good conscience go through in times of war.

Einstein complained that the public's admiration of his scientific achievements was very excessive and "simply grotesque."⁴ Similarly, decades after World War I, his fame as a pacifist obscured the labors of other individuals, in Germanic lands, who, unlike Einstein, carried out dangerously brave actions to oppose the war. In particular, two of Einstein's friends,

¹ See, e.g., Virginia Iris Holmes, *Einstein's Pacifism and World War I* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017).

² Roy MacLeod, "The Mobilisation of Minds and the Crisis in International Science: *The Krieg der Geister and the Manifesto of the 93*," *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 11, no. 1 (2018): 58-78.

³ Einstein, quoted in "Einstein Fears Reception in U.S.; Dislikes Crowds," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph* (West Virginia), November 23, 1930, p. 4.

⁴ Albert Einstein, "Some Notes on My American Impressions," 1921, in Einstein, *The World as I See It*, trans. Alan Harris (London: John Lane, 1935), 37.

Fritz Adler and Georg Nicolai, risked their lives trying to disrupt the imperial military hierarchies of Austria and Germany. The contrasting behaviors of these three men illuminate how our own behaviors in contemporary crises may range from inaction to radical reactions.

Fritz Adler had been Einstein's friend since the 1890s in Zurich. As Adler wrote, they had "parallel lives."⁵ Both born in 1879, they were both Jewish by descent and ethnicity, but had both abandoned Judaism. Both of their fathers wanted them to become engineers, but they both refused. Instead, they both studied physics in Zurich: Einstein at the Polytechnic and Adler nearby at the University. They took some physics classes together. In Zurich, they both met and fell in love with foreign women. They both married in 1903. They both had three children, though Einstein did not meet or raise his daughter. They both did their physics dissertations under Professor Alfred Kleiner.

Adler became an instructor of physics first, at Zurich, while Einstein published physics papers as an amateur. Einstein remained underemployed at the Swiss patent office from 1902 until 1909, when Adler was offered a professorship at the University of Zurich. Surprisingly, Adler turned it down despite his family's dire financial needs, because, he argued, the job should go to Einstein. Thus, Einstein's first true academic job reached him thanks to Adler's principled and selfless kindness. As if that weren't enough, Adler then found a place for Einstein's family to live: in the apartment right above Adler's. So they were friends, neighbors, and instructors in the same physics department for two years.

⁵ Fritz Adler, quoted in Ronald Florence, *Fritz: The Story of a Political Assassin* (New York: Dial Press, 1971), 44.

Einstein was roughly apolitical, while Adler was a dedicated member of a socialist party. Adler also enabled Einstein to get his second job in physics, by convincing Einstein to lie: to write that he believed in Judaism when applying for an academic post at the German University in Prague. ("Religionless" persons could not be employed in government jobs.) Thus, Einstein departed to Prague in 1911 to work as a physicist. Adler, however, departed to Vienna, where he was no longer a physics instructor, but instead became an editor of socialist newspapers, and worked for the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria.

In 1914, Einstein moved to Berlin. Then the war began. From 1914 to 1917, Einstein's office was at Fritz Haber's institute of chemistry, which was placed under the oversight of Germany's Ministry of War. His good friend, Captain Haber, was developing poison gases for the German army. Despite Einstein's disgust for the war, in 1915 he wrote to his friend Heinrich Zangger, expressing his comfortable and "conscious detachment" from his surroundings: "why shouldn't one live happily as the service staff of the madhouse?"⁶ At the time, half of his salary came from a Prussian industry that held military contracts. In 1916 he again wrote to Zangger: "Against the insane bustle of the world at large, I shut my eyes when possible, having fully lost my social feeling."⁷

The war frightened many people, including Sigmund Freud, especially because his three sons became soldiers.

⁶ Albert Einstein to Heinrich Zangger, ca. 10 April 1915, Robert Schulmann et al., eds. *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 8A (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 116; einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/vol8a-doc/188

⁷ Einstein to Zangger, 11 July 1916, Diana Kormos Buchwald et al., eds., *Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 43; einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/vol10-doc/113



Dead German soldiers, Western Front, during World War I. The most shocking thing about this photograph is not the image of four dead German soldiers crumpled in the mud at the bottom of their trench, but the rather triumphant note of the caption written by the British photographer, which reads: 'A coomn [common] scene in a German trench after our men had been over'. In contrast, the memoirs and reflections of the ordinary soldiers far more often show empathy, a pity for the dead, regardless of their nationality.

In 1915 Freud wrote his now-classic essays on "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," arguing that war deformed civilization as it converted death into something that was no longer a matter of chance.

The empires converted young men into soldiers, or cannon fodder, including men from distant colonies and countries. They were subjected to unimaginable barrages of new industrial weapons: machine guns, Stokes mortar shells, projectiles, tanks, grenades, underground explosives, poison

gases, and countless bombs from dirigibles and airplanes. In Belgium and France, the German, French, and British armies clashed in seemingly endless, virtually stalemated battles. Consider the 141-day Battle of the Somme, which lasted from July 1st to November 18, 1916.⁸ There the British army was commanded by Field Marshal Douglas Haig, overseeing an unimaginable butchery of men. The first day alone had 57,470

⁸ "What was the Battle of the Somme?" Imperial War Museums, www.iwm.org.uk/history/key-facts-about-the-battle-of-the-somme

British casualties, including 19,240 who were killed. When we now read Haig's report, in tranquility, it seems surreal in its alien indifference: "Very successful attack this morning ... All went like clockwork ... The battle is going very well for us ... Our troops are in wonderful spirits and full of confidence."⁹ In this single prolonged pointless battle, the deaths included 23,000 soldiers from faraway Australia, who were killed for nothing.

The record-breaking horrors can best be grasped by reading soldiers' own accounts, so consider the words of one of them. In the midst of the gruesome ordeal, an Australian soldier, Lieutenant "Alec" Raws, wrote loving but graphic letters to his

⁹ Duff Cooper, *Haig*, Vol. 1 (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), xxx. ["some accounts say "men" instead of "troops," but we haven't found the original.]

German trenches demolished by artillery (Battle of Mount Sorrel, Belgium), showing German dead. June, 1916. Wikimedia Commons.



family. On August 4, 1916, Raws described the battlefield of "the Great Push" in France, where countless bombshells flew overhead and exploded nearby, as he stood among "thousands of unburied dead around me," a hellscape far worse than the horrors of Gallipoli and Verdun. He explained: "We are lousy, stinking, ragged, unshaven, sleepless. Even when we're back a bit we can't sleep for our own guns. I have one puttee, a dead man's helmet, another dead man's gas protector, a dead man's bayonet. My tunic is rotten with other men's blood and partly splattered with a comrade's brains. It is horrible, but why should you people at home not know? Several of my friends are raving mad."¹⁰

¹⁰ John Alexander Raws to Norman Bayles, 4 August 1916, in Australian War Memorial, Photostat copies of letters, p. 140, in www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2080597?image=140. For contextualization of Raws' letters, see: Thomas G. Palaima, "War Stories Told, Untold and Retold from Troy to Tinian to Fort Campbell," *Arion* 23, no. 3 (2016) 1-33, esp. 6-8 (www.bu.edu/arion/files/2016/03/Palaima1.pdf) and "The First Casualty," *Times Higher Education* (December 20/27, 2012): 32-37.

Lieutenant Raws wrote that traditional soldierly virtues like personal courage counted for nothing there; instead, "It is all nerve. Once that goes one becomes a gibbering maniac." The shelling and gunfire noise were unbearable; villages, buildings, trees, and bodies were all "pounded to nothing."¹¹ In just three days, Raws lost his brother Goldy, his two best friends, and six of his seven fellow officers. Raws was "buried" repeatedly by explosions, under dirt and shrapnel, under rotting corpses and the dying, yet he crawled out. He endured innumerable bombs: "millions of shells, shells all day and all night, high explosives," bursting almost constantly, as scores of soldiers became insane and fled from the hellscape of craters and muddy trenches. In anxiety and horror, Raws complained about the tear gas, the sulfur, the putrid smells: "The stench, and the horridness of it can but be mentioned. I have sat on corpses, walked on corpses, and pillaged corpses," yet later he lost everything he carried.¹² The carnage was horrific. Raws wrote that he never saw a body buried, as the land and the trenches were saturated with dead men, rotting, "the limbs, the mangled bodies, and stray heads." On August 19, Raws wrote to his brother Lennon about their younger brother Goldy: "I want to tell you, so that it may be on record, that I honestly believe Goldy and many other officers were murdered on the night you know of, through the incompetence, callousness, and personal vanity of those high in authority."¹³

Four days later, Alec Raws too was killed in combat. A fellow Australian soldier, Corporal Arthur G. Thomas, enduring the

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 141, in www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2080597?image=141

¹² Raws, 8 December 1916, in *ibid.*, 153, in www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2080597?image=153

¹³ John Alexander Raws to William Lennon Raws, 19 August 1916, in *ibid.*, 160, in www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2080597?image=160

same slaughter, begged in vain, "For Christ's sake, write a book on the life of an infantryman and by doing so you will quickly prevent these shocking tragedies."¹⁴

One of the chief murderers was Field Marshal Haig, of whom Britain's Prime Minister David Lloyd George remarked, "Haig does not care how many men he loses. He just squanders the lives of these boys."¹⁵

Meanwhile, hundreds of miles away, in the comfortable imperial capitals of Berlin and Vienna, what did people do to oppose this senseless war? Most people did nothing. In Berlin, Albert Einstein had finished his theory of gravity right before 1916. So, strangely for a man later renowned for his pacifism, he then started to design airplane wings for the L.V.G. aircraft company. L.V.G. was a military contractor, so potentially Einstein's calculations and designs could have helped the German Air Force.¹⁶ Meanwhile, his friend Fritz Adler, thoroughly frustrated, was in Vienna, writing political news articles against the war, shocked that none of the political parties dared to oppose it. And Austria's minister president had suspended meetings of parliament.

Vienna had the shadowy atmosphere of moral ambiguity and immoral business-as-usual depravity evident in the bombastic pretense of its central *Ringstrasse*. At the time, Vienna reeked with strains of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant discrimination. Vienna was the slow-cooking cultural crockpot of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and yet human beings with eastern

¹⁴ Peter Charlton, *Australians on the Somme: Pozieres 1916* (London: Lee Cooper, 1986), 263.

¹⁵ A.J.P. Taylor, ed., *Lloyd George: A Diary by Frances Stephenson* (London: Hutchinson 1971), 139.

¹⁶ Alberto A. Martinez, "The Questionable Inventions of the Clever Dr. Einstein," *Metascience* 23 (2014): 52-54.

European and Balkan names (Slovenian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Bohemian, Moravian, Czech, and Polish) were viewed there as undesirable foreigners somehow corrupting Germanic Austrian purity.

On October 21, 1916, the “parallel lives” of Einstein and Adler diverged radically. That day, Adler skipped lunch with his mother. Instead he went to eat lunch alone at the luxurious upper dining room of the Meissl & Schadn Hotel. There, having finished his dessert, Adler walked up to the table where Count Karl von Stürgkh, the Minister President of Austria, was sitting. Adler took out a gun and shot the President three times, killing him. Waiters, imperial officers with swords, and other men lunged at Adler. He fired two more shots, injuring a waiter and Baron Aehrenthal. Officers piled on top of him; he surrendered. Adler used a Browning gun, the same American brand that had been used by the student Gavrilo Princip to assassinate the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, two years earlier.

Some people on the streets of Austria cheered and celebrated the assassination. Yet in Berlin, the newspapers lied, saying that nobody was on the streets in Vienna. Quickly, the newspaper articles claimed that Adler’s crime was a private act with no consequences. Back then, already, the structures of power and propaganda propagated the lie that individuals are powerless to change society. They portrayed the war as something that no man could stop, an inevitable, irrevocable conflict which would continue regardless of the fact that Adler alone had decapitated one of the heads of the hydra, the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Adler’s motives in killing von Stürgkh prove that he knew what was what in late 1916 Vienna. Adler hoped that by removing the President from office, “with extreme prejudice,” he might get the long-stalled

machinery of government unblocked and heading toward reversing or remedying Austria’s bloody crime of starting the horrific war. Yet the well-educated and cultured bourgeoisie decried Adler’s action as an aberration, a grossly unacceptable breakdown of civility. Those in power and the presumably sophisticated upper middle class passively accepted that Stürgkh’s bureaucracy had terminated Austrian democracy and prolonged the killings of millions of men and women in a futile war. Yet they denounced poor Fritz Adler for being uncivil because he could no longer accept the murderous status quo.

Was it terrorism? No. We may contrast Adler’s action with that of Émile Henry, years earlier, in Paris. From spring 1892 to spring 1894, eleven explosions in Paris killed ten people. There were other such acts and failed attempts.¹⁷ Before the tail end of this series the twenty-one-year-old French anarchist Émile Henry, who had earned his *baccalauréat* in science from the Sorbonne in 1888, concluded by ineluctable moral reasoning that French high society was utterly corrupted and criminally so, since they persisted in accepting the poverty and homelessness into which tens of thousands of working-class Parisians were driven by government-sponsored projects for building lavish structures for entertaining the rich, such as the Opéra Garnier. Émile Henry therefore decided to jolt the bourgeoisie into awareness by bombing them while they dined finely. On the evening of February 12, 1894, at 9:01 PM, Henry threw a dynamite bomb into the crowded Café Terminus in Paris, feeling impelled to do this “propaganda by the deed,” but, unlike Adler, without targeting a government figure.

17 Gregory Shaya, “How to Make an Anarchist-Terrorist: an Essay on the Political Imaginary in Fin-de-Siècle France,” *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 2 (2010): 523-526.

Henry had decided that killing and maiming some French civilians might frighten smug members of the French bourgeoisie out of their habitual willful ignorance “about the economic exploitation and intolerable social conditions that made their comfortable lives possible.” At his trial, the highly educated Henry declared, “The bourgeois are never innocent.”¹⁸ He also sought to “shake downtrodden members of the working class out of their political apathy.” In his classic book, *The Dynamite Club*, John Merriman calculated that in Paris in the 1890s, “a typical working-class family of four, with all four members working, could earn about 760 francs per year, but required 860 francs for poor clothes, poor food and tiny apartments without heat or running water.” As Merriman put it, “The belle époque was not belle for most French men and women. ... Millions still lived in abject poverty.”¹⁹ Similar conditions prevailed in Vienna in the 1910s. The conspicuous contrast between uncaring rich and uncared for poor made an indelible imprint on Adolf Hitler.²⁰

But what about Adler—why did he do it?

Immediately afterward, the Austrian government lied, stating that Adler was insane. Newspapers in Austria and Germany lied too: they said he was insane. Adler’s father, Victor Adler, was the longtime chairman of the Social

18 Ibid., 525.

19 See Palaima’s review essay on *The Dynamite Club* in *The Texas Observer* (January 9, 2009): www.texasobserver.org/bombs-away.

20 See Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler’s Vienna: A Dictator’s Apprenticeship* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 135 and 137. “Ultimately, [Hitler] said in a monologue in 1941, his suffering in Vienna had turned into the greatest blessing for the German people.” Hitler’s friend August Kubizeck reports that on February 26, 1908, the future Führer observed in front of Parliament a spontaneous demonstration by a mob of destitute urban poor as it was broken up by mounted police with drawn sabers, and Hitler went into a fit of anger against political figures who exploited the miserable poor for their own advancement.

Democratic Workers’ Party and he was well aware of how the war was being fought. Yet he too lied, claiming that his son was insane; and so did his defense lawyers for the trial.²¹ Likewise, Einstein lied when he wrote to the Emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Karl I, claiming that Fritz’s action was not a crime but “a tragic accident” caused by mental illness.²²

Yet Fritz Adler himself explained that he was not insane at all. And experts on mental health, the court’s psychiatrists, examined Adler and concluded that he was not insane.²³ In his trial, Adler explained that his action was the premeditated logical consequence of the criminal actions by the government and by President Stürgkh. Adler explained that the President had personally ended Austrian democracy by suspending Parliament, by stopping them from democratically deliberating about the war, and thus disfiguring Austria into an absolutist state. He argued that the President had violated constitutional law, in particular by enacting the mass murders of war, without the consent of the Austrian people. Stürgkh’s government had stolen the people’s constitutional right to self-government, so Adler claimed to have the legal right and the moral obligation to remove the President. Contrary to those who tried to hide Fritz Adler’s rationale under the lie of insanity, Adler himself testified that the moral justification of his action was “perfect.” Moreover, Adler dared to say that since other ministers of the government also had reneged on their legal duties, they too should be killed.

21 Florence, *Fritz: The Story of a Political Assassin*, 185, 233, 258.

22 Einstein to Emperor Karl I, spring 1917, in Diana Kormos Buchwald et al., eds., *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 73; in <https://einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/vol10-doc/143>

23 Florence, *Fritz: The Story of a Political Assassin*, 253-54.

Wien: 5 Heller.
Wien: Monatlich K 1.50
mit Zustellung ins Haus.

Illustrierte

Provinz: 6 Heller.
17. Jahrgang, Nr. 6040.

Kronen Zeitung

Verantw. Red.: H. Eisenmenger. Buchdruckerei und Verlagsverlag G. Davis & Co., Wien, IX, Pratergasse 28. Verantwortl.: H. Eisenmenger.

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L. Scherstrasse 19, Teleph. 7927.

Wien, Sonntag den 22. Oktober 1916.
Redaktion: Wien, IX/1, Pratergasse 28.
Tel.-n. Tel. 12805. Telef.-Tel. 14330. Manuskripte werden nicht zurückgeschickt.

Provinz-Abonnement
vierteljährlich 5 Kronen.
Bestellungen für weniger als drei
Monate werden nicht angenommen.

Siegreiche Kämpfe in der Dobruudscha. — Unsere Verbündeten in die feindliche Hauptstellung eingedrungen. — 3000 Russen gefangen.



Ermordung des Ministerpräsidenten Grafen Stürgkh.

Beim Mittagessen im Hotel „Meißl & Schadn“ erschossen.

Der Attentäter — Dr. Friedr. Adler.

Wien: 5 Heller.
Wien: Monatlich K 1.50
mit Zustellung ins Haus.

Illustrierte

Provinz: 6 Heller.
17. Jahrgang, Nr. 6041.

Kronen Zeitung

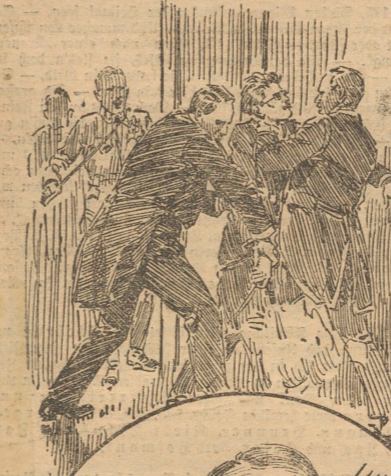
Verantw. Red.: H. Eisenmenger. Buchdruckerei und Verlagsverlag G. Davis & Co., Wien, IX, Pratergasse 28. Verantwortl.: H. Eisenmenger.

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IX/1, Pratergasse 28, Tel. 15744.
Stadtbureau:
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Wien, Montag den 23. Oktober 1916.
Redaktion: Wien, IX/1, Pratergasse 28.
Tel.-n. Tel. 12805. Telef.-Tel. 14330. Manuskripte werden nicht zurückgeschickt.

Provinz-Abonnement
vierteljährlich 5 Kronen.
Bestellungen für weniger als drei
Monate werden nicht angenommen.

Die Russen und Rumänen auf der ganzen Dobruudschafront geworfen.



Oberkellner Herr Friskmann
der den Täter festnahm

Dr. Friedrich Adler
nach seiner Verhaftung.

Der Mord an dem Ministerpräsidenten Grafen Stürgkh.
Die Rivrit „Aus unserer Feldpostmappe“ befindet sich auf den Seiten 2 bis 6.

"Assassination of Minister-President Count Stürgkh." *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung* (Vienna), October 22, 1916.

"Dr. Friedrich Adler after his arrest." *Illustrierte Kronen Zeitung* (Vienna), October 23, 1916.

Thoroughly insubordinate, Nicolai refused to practice killing. Instead, he escaped from the base, fled to Berlin, and sought shelter in the apartment of Elsa, her two daughters (Ilse and Margot), and Einstein. From there, Nicolai and Ilse wrote to Germany's Minister of War, hoping to be freed from military service. Finally, Ilse helped Nicolai get help from rebel elements in the military, members of the Spartacus League. Three airmen defectors, with Nicolai, stole two warplanes from the German Air Force base in Neuruppin. And they flew out of Germany.²⁶

It is unclear why Einstein worked on airplane wings, and only ever during World War I. To the journalist Alexander Moszkowski, Einstein voiced indifference about the applications of scientific research, remarking, to Moszkowski's unease, that "As long as I am moving along lines of research, the *praxis*, or any practical outcome that presently or in the future can possibly arise from it, is completely indifferent to me."²⁷ In contrast, Nicolai helped to steal two German warplanes because, he said, he wanted to restore the flying invention to its noble origins: a vessel that would fly over countries' frontiers, showing that frontiers are fictions. When Nicolai landed near Copenhagen, Danish authorities arrested him and interrogated him. When they finally realized that he was the famous pacifist doctor, Nicolai was celebrated in the international news as a hero.

For years, Nicolai had beseeched the German people, intellectuals, government officials, and military officers to stop the invasion of Belgium and France. Did it help? Culture teaches us, again, that an individual cannot make a difference, that one person

²⁶ Zuelzer, *The Nicolai Case*, 230-31.

²⁷ Alexander Moszkowski, *Einstein: Einblicke in seine Gedankenwelt* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1921), 173.

cannot stop an avalanche. Nicolai was constantly shocked and crushed that intellectuals and politicians did not oppose the war. They kept their mouths shut.

Reality, however, is a surprising place, and history is rich with lessons. Less than a year after Fritz Adler killed President Stürgkh, Emperor Karl I commuted Adler's condemnation, so he *was not* executed. Moreover, on the last day of October 1918, the Emperor granted amnesty to all political prisoners—so Adler was immediately freed. In other words, merely two years after having assassinated the President of warmongering Austria, Fritz Adler was again a free man on the streets of Vienna, as a hero. He had not repented his actions or modified his anti-war reasoning. He then lived a very long life; he even lived longer than his good friend, Einstein.

Adler and Nicolai are mostly forgotten, while Einstein is admired everywhere. Contrasted with their daring actions, Einstein's early pacifism seems very appealing because it is similar to the low-level pacifist behaviors that many of us exhibit. We complain about wars privately, on the comfy living room sofa, reading or watching the news with disgust. We may even quietly sign a petition, but without making a spectacle, without publicly denouncing warmongers by their names or in our names.

Here then is the perennial question or, if you will, the moral of our war story: should academics work "for the benefit of life," as the Nobel Prize medallion in literature suggests? Or, should we labor to lengthen our résumés, to increase profits for corporations, and to entertain elitist social groups? Or what should we do as the humanities are devalued and capitalist pursuit of profits becomes a dominant ethos taught at institutions of higher education as they focus on business and technologies?

As Einstein put it on April 26, 1918, "one of the strongest motives that leads to art and science is the need to escape from daily life, from its painful harshness and desolate dreariness, to escape from the shackles of one's own ever-shifting desires."²⁸ That is, should we act like intellectual ostriches? Reflecting on the formula for success, Einstein said that it is the sum $X + Y + Z$: work, plus play, plus keeping your mouth shut. The quiet Albert Einstein is a useful hero because he resembles many academics. He validates passivity. In May 1918, Einstein admitted to Nicolai: "If I am to be censured, it is only thus, because I am sitting here. But I myself do not know whether I should blame myself for my passivity."²⁹

In recent history, however, the Vietnam War period stands out as a time when many Americans did not settle for passivity. In the 1960s, singer Joan Baez rightly argued:

*If everybody really listened to his own conscience and really acted upon what he thought was right and wrong, rather than being so hopelessly passive, which I think just about everybody is. I think it's probably the main disease: the passivity, where we will listen to whatever anybody else says. It's daddy, and mommy, and schoolteacher, and Sunday school teacher, and President.*³⁰

In this connection, we may well compare Einstein to Bob Dylan. Einstein was brought to Germany by three very bald men: Max Planck, Fritz Haber, Walther Nernst, all three of whom were committed

²⁸ Albert Einstein, "Motive des Forschens," Michel Janssen et al., eds., *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 7 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 55; in einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/vol7-doc/103.

²⁹ Einstein to Georg Nicolai, 12 May 1918, in Robert Schulmann et al., eds., *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, Vol. 8B (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 759; also in einsteinpapers.press.princeton.edu/vol8b-doc/199.

³⁰ Interview segment in the documentary film *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* (2005), also available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M7usLzBXgQ.

to Germany's imperial nationalism. They all signed the Manifesto of the 93. Similarly, in the 1960s the young Bob Dylan complained that old "bald men," were insensitive, retrograde, or perhaps war-mongering, or immoral.³¹ Yet Dylan admitted that he himself was not a protest leader. He was an inspirational songwriter, yet very much "an outsider," who was misrepresented as an insider of the anti-war protest movement. Joan Baez played shows with Dylan, but she wanted more from him; she wanted him to become a protester, as if his songs weren't enough. Dylan wanted to do Carnegie Hall, Baez wanted him to do protests.

Similarly, Nicolai pestered Einstein again and again, but failed to convert him into a protester. Nicolai discovered that people's relentless silence, plus their savage propensity to go to war, not only against foreigners but against subgroups of one's own citizenry, reveals that "only legalism" can save us: a system of enforced laws.

Our story has concerned Vienna, Berlin and the Great War, "the war to end all wars," except that it didn't, and from the look of things, no war ever will. The American corporate news media has normalized wars. Wars last for many years, and they overlap, as if wartime is perpetual, as predicted by Orwell, part of the permanent distant landscape.

We feel sympathy for Alec Raws, and for Freud, in his concern for his sons at the war; we feel sympathy for Adler in his desperately sane act of murder in trying to push the Austrian government to work again, towards democracy and peace. We feel sympathy for Georg Nicolai, for hoping that his lectures, plus a manifesto,

³¹ Consider especially Dylan's famous speech upon receiving the Tom Paine Award of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee on December 13, 1963, and his follow-up letter. See www.corliss-lamont.org/dylan.htm.

plus his book, plus a book of essays on philosophers, including one by Einstein, might diminish the war; and later, Nicolai's hope that a book of essays on internationalism might do the trick.

We may add the English soldier Siegfried Sassoon, who in 1917 wrote his "Non Serviam" declaration: that "having seen and endured the sufferings of the troops" in protracted combat for no good reason, he would no longer participate in prolonging the evil goals of lying politicians. Printed in the London *Times*, Sassoon's protest shocked the British because they had not imagined the enormous scope of the butchery. His words risked his life. He could have been court-martialed for treason. But Sassoon was a member of a rich English family, so,

they hid the truth by declaring him temporarily insane: shell shock, they put him in a mental institution.³² In dealing with both Sassoon and Adler, the ruling classes denied logic.

History illuminates forgotten times, enabling the dead to talk with us about senseless injustices. They also speak about how circumstances compel educated moral persons to move, to do something. Not all assassins are Lee Harvey Oswalds or Byron De La Beckwiths. And some mass murderers are called Stürgh, Haig, and Hindenberg. And even bright professors like Einstein wrongly learn to lay low and shut up. We invite readers to use this true war story to think and think again about how war stories, like parables, should guide us to say more and do more. **A**

³²"An Officer and Nerve Shock," *The Times* (London), 31 July 1917, p. 24, also in www.bl.uk/collection-items/siegfried-sassoons-statement-of-protest-against-the-war-and-related-letters. Sassoon was interned at the Craiglockhart Hospital in Edinburgh, which was established to treat psychological traumas during World War I, following the staggering numbers of casualties in the battle of the Somme in 1916. There he met and encouraged working-class soldier poet Wilfred Owen, arguably the greatest and most honest, direct and graphic of World War I poets. For context read Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (New York: Plume, 1991).



ART WORLDS