



# Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, The Supreme Court, and Free Speech (Cornell Paperbacks)

*Richard Polenberg*

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## **Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, The Supreme Court, and Free Speech (Cornell Paperbacks)**

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Jacob Abrams et al. v. United States is the landmark Supreme Court case in the definition of free speech. Although the 1918 conviction of four Russian Jewish anarchists for distributing leaflets protesting America's intervention in the Russian revolution was upheld, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's dissenting opinion (with Justice Louis Brandeis) concerning "clear and present danger" has proved the touchstone of almost all subsequent First Amendment theory and litigation. In *Fighting Faiths*, Richard Polenberg explores the causes and characters of this dramatic episode in American history. He traces the Jewish immigrant experience, the lives of the convicted anarchists before and after the trials, the careers of the major players in the court cases—men such as Holmes, defense attorney Harry Weinberger, Southern Judge Henry DeLamar Clayton, Jr., and the young J. Edgar Hoover—and the effects of this important case on present-day First Amendment rights.

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