



The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory

Tim Grady

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The First World War saw almost 100,000 German Jews wear the uniform of the Imperial army; some 12,000 of these soldiers lost their lives in battle. Over the last century, public memory of their sacrifice has been very gradually subsumed into the much greater catastrophe of the Holocaust. This book focuses on the multifaceted ways in which these Jewish soldiers have variously been remembered and forgotten from 1914 through until the late 1970s. During and immediately after the conflict, Germany's Jewish population were active participants in a memory culture that honoured the war dead as national heroes. With the decline of the Weimar Republic and the National Socialists' rise to power, however, the public commemoration of the Jewish soldiers gradually faded, as Germany's Jewish communities were systematically destroyed by the Nazi regime. It was only in the late 1950s that both Jews and other Germans began to rediscover and to reremember this largely neglected group. By examining Germany's complex and continually evolving memory culture, this book opens up a new approach to the study of both German and German-Jewish history. In doing so, it draws out a narrative of entangled and overlapping relations between Jews and non-Jews during the short twentieth century. The Jewish / non-Jewish relationship, the book argues, did not end on the battlefields of the First World War, but ran much deeper to extend through into the era of the Cold War.



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