

Introduction
by

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On the eve of the First World War, the German Jewish Marcuse family gave the outward impression of leading a very comfortable middle-class existence. 38-year-old Harry Marcuse—a medical doctor by profession—lived with his wife Mimi and two young daughters in Berlin. The start of armed hostilities in August 1914, however, threw their lives asunder. Harry departed for the Eastern Front, where his medical training was urgently needed. Meanwhile, his brother Josef headed in the opposite direction to serve with a cavalry battalion on the Western Front. Alone with two small children, Mimi moved to be near her parents in Teplice, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There, she managed to squeeze in time to help in a soup kitchen as well as with the Red Cross. Sadly, as it turned out, she was also well-positioned to provide her parents with emotional support. During the first winter of the war, Mimi's brother Paul vanished in the East, presumed captured, though he was never seen again. Another brother, Hans, failed to recover fully from typhoid fever and took his own life in 1917.¹

The Marcuses' path through the First World War was remarkably varied. Family members were strewn across France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, where their daily routines ranged from serving at the front lines, tending the wounded or—in the case of Mimi Marcuse—caring for the family and household. Irrespective of their own wartime role, loss and grief touched all in equal measure; the deaths of the two brothers, Hans and Paul, being most deeply felt. It is the sheer diversity of Jewish wartime experiences, as encapsulated by

the Marcuse family, which lies at the very heart of this volume. Its central argument is that historians cannot interpret a singular Jewish war experience solely through the dynamics of antisemitism and Jewish identity, which could be a category of self-designation and self-perception ascribed from ‘within,’ or a category ascribed from ‘outside’— related to religion, heredity, or ‘race.’ ‘Jewishness’ and ‘antisemitism’ as such need to be understood as heterogenous, manifold, highly debated, and historically versatile categories. Central European Jewish experiences were diverse, and fragmented along gender, political, geographic, social and subjective lines. In short, there was no single Jewish experience of the First World War that could be addressed as an empirical, epistemic, or theoretical entity.

The widest divergence surely occurred between those in the military and those at home, but even here the diversity of experience was wide. In total, some 100,000 Jews served in the German military, though of course not all were at the forward lines.² Some German Jews ended up in administrative roles, others in medical or garrison-based jobs. While most military-aged Jewish men were drafted into the army, it also needs to be stressed that German Jews served in the Imperial Navy and in the new German air force as well. The number of Jews fighting in the Austro-Hungarian army was much higher, with more than 300,000 men conscripted during the course of the First World War. The Habsburg Empire was also far more amenable to the idea of Jewish officers. By 1900, about 18 percent of the reserve officer corps consisted of Jews. In Germany, by stark contrast, the doors to the officer corps only started to slowly open during the war. Prior to the conflict, no more than a handful of Jewish officers had been commissioned, and these had all been in the Bavarian army.³

¹ Barbara Reisner, ed., *Kriegsbriefe 1914–1918: Dr. Harry & Mimi Marcuse* (London: Lulu, 2013).

² Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 27.

³ Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 89–92. At the same time, some German Jewish men who converted to Christianity had a better chance of being promoted into the officer corps, though discrimination persisted.

At home, Jews, whether in the German or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or in other places in Central Europe, performed a wide variety of wartime roles. Like Mimi Marcuse, many middle-class women volunteered to run soup kitchens or to work at local railway stations, serving passing troop trains with supplies.⁴ Elsewhere, Jewish women volunteered as nurses or threw themselves behind patriotic fundraising efforts. In Vienna, for example, middle-class Jewish women collected food and clothing for the thousands of refugees who had fled the fighting in Eastern Europe.⁵ Jews also took on a prominent role in helping to shape the war economies of the two empires. Nowhere was this truer than with Walther Rathenau's establishment of Germany's War Raw Materials Department (*Kriegsrohstoffabteilung des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*), which coordinated economic planning and the distribution of essential industrial supplies.⁶

In many ways, the First World War should be seen as a history of travelling and journeys. Troops went in one direction, workers in another, while refugees, including large numbers of East European Jews, fled to the relative safety of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Mimi Marcuse herself travelled regularly from Berlin to Teplice during the war. This was not just a case of moving between home and family, it was also a journey between the metropole and the province, and between the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The way people experienced war in each of these settings was always very different. Most significantly, the Austro-Hungarian Empire split more quickly and deeply along regional and

⁴ In general see, Adrian Gregory, "Railway Stations: Gateways and Termini," in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, eds., *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin 1914–1919*, vol. 2, *A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 23–56.

⁵ Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 71.

⁶ Shulamit Volkov, *Walther Rathenau: Weimar's Fallen Statesman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 122–23; Christian Schölzel, *Walther Rathenau: Eine Biographie* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006), 176–79.

ethnic lines. As was the case in Germany, these divisions played out through strikes, protests and social unrest.⁷

Regardless of the region, death was an all too common part of the conflict. It is estimated that some 30,000 Jewish soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army died in the war, while approximately 12,000 German Jewish soldiers also lost their lives.⁸ Mimi Marcuse's two brothers, Paul and Hans, were among this number. Mass death—for this is what it amounted to—may have occurred on the battlefield, but it shaped the lives of those at home too. People had to live with the constant fear that loved ones could be killed or maimed, while the Jewish communities in both Germany and Austria provided what comfort they could with a constant stream of remembrance services and elaborate funerals.⁹

One notable absence from the Marcuses' wartime diaries and memoirs is any mention of antisemitism. The reason why—at first glance—it is so surprising is that, eclipsing the 'spirit of August 1914' and the *Burgfrieden* ("peace within the fortress"), in October 1916, the German military issued the infamous 'Jew Count' the so-called *Judenzählung*, which was based on the questionnaire "Evidence of the Participation of Jewish Conscripts in the Army" (*Nachweisung der beim Heere befindlichen wehrpflichtigen Juden*) ordered by the Prussian War Ministry. It was a census of Jews serving in the army, based on flawed methods, which implied in effect that Jews had attempted to avoid frontline service.¹⁰ However, while the census and the post-war 'stab-in-the-back' myth (*Dolchstoßlegende*) reflected the hatreds and prejudices imposed 'from above,' they did not necessarily dominate the narratives of Jewish soldiers and civilians who had extremely complex experiences and memories of the war.

⁷ Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914–1918* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 368–74.

⁸ Erwin Schmidl, *Habsburgs jüdische Soldaten 1788–1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), 115.

⁹ Tim Grady, *The German-Jewish Soldiers of the First World War in History and Memory*.

¹⁰ See Werner T. Angress, "The German Army's 'Judenzählung' of 1916 – Genesis-Consequences-Significance," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23, 1978, 117-137; see also Michael Geheran, "Judenzählung (Jewish Census)," in *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, eds., issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2015-07-09. DOI: [10.15463/ie1418.10684](https://doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10684).

German Jewish experiences on the home and combat fronts were diverse and reflected different perceptions and interpretations of the war. Encounters with antisemitism in the daily interactions with frontline comrades or neighbors at home often made more of an impact than prejudice directed by military and political leaders. Wartime narratives by men and women are filled with anecdotes about positive and negative experiences with gentiles, often confusing feelings of acceptance mixed with anxieties over exclusion in everyday life, rather than reflections on the ‘Jew Count.’

The central point on which this volume pivots, therefore, is less the Jewish census of 1916 and the wider history of Christian-based anti-Judaism or racial antisemitism. Instead, the chapters hinge far more on the exceedingly various experiences of Jewish men and women during the war. By shifting the focus in this way, the volume broadens the way in which central European Jewish history is understood. Our approach is determinedly interdisciplinary, incorporating research perspectives from history, literature, cultural studies, Jewish studies, film studies, as well as gender studies. Only in this way is it possible to uncover new sites of inquiry and innovative methods that challenge existing assumptions about Jewish perceptions of identity, assimilation and exclusion in the First World War. This volume addresses the following overlapping questions: How did the First World War impact Central European Jews, including men and women on the combat and home fronts? To what degree were German and Austrian Jewish experiences in the war distinct or universal? Which conclusions did Jewish men and women draw from their wartime experiences? How did they remember the war? To what extent did Jews share these memories with gentiles in a local context, and contextualize their own perceptions of the war? How did Jewish religious, ethnic, national, gender and other identities intersect with and diverge from mainstream cultural identities?

The bifurcated historical debate over inclusion versus exclusion tends to obscure the complex, nuanced experiences of Jewish men and women who experienced often contradictory encounters that oscillated between signs of integration and acceptance and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes and prejudices. For most ordinary German Jewish men and women, the ‘Jew Count’ was not necessarily a rupture in Jewish/non-Jewish relations. They had already experienced antisemitism before the war and it continued to exist after the ‘Jew Count.’ Therefore, the military’s census could easily be shelved away as just another example of state-level prejudice. Wartime narratives by men and women are filled with anecdotes about positive and negative experiences with gentiles, often confusing feelings of acceptance mixed with anxieties over exclusion in everyday life, rather than reflections on the ‘Jew Count.’ This volume seeks to highlight the complex responses to explicit, subtle, and latent forms of antisemitism as well as the diversity of experiences narrated by men and women in the ‘Great War.’

Historiographical Background and Methodologies

While recent scholarship on Jewish experiences in the First World War has emphasized the need for more international comparative approaches, there is still much to explore about the experiences of Central European Jews.¹¹ In particular, much of the existing narrative on German and Austrian Jews has been shaped by interwar memories of the war experience.

¹¹ Some of the leading influential scholarship on national and religious identities of Central European Jews in World War I includes Marsha Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (Oxford: Littman Kibrary of Jewish Civilization, 2008). On prewar tensions between German/Austrian and Jewish identity, seminal works include Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975); Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984); Marsha Rozenblit and Jonathan Karp, eds., *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2017).

Taking into consideration later National Socialist attacks and the Shoah, the existing narrative tends to highlight illusory hopes for integration that were shattered during the First World War. Interestingly, many of the first histories of German Jewish wartime participation to appear after the Second World War came not from Jewish scholars, but from non-Jewish German historians. Local and regional German histories of Jewish life, which gradually started to be published from the early 1960s onwards, often mentioned Jews in the First World War. However, these discussions touched on the war almost as a by-product of wider attempts to uncover the history of lost Jewish communities. In doing so, they tended to idealize particular facets of Jewish life in pre-Nazi Germany while downplaying other factors, such as chronic antisemitism.¹²

In the 1960s and 1970s, the first comprehensive body of scholarship began to emerge, beginning with Egmont Zechlin's work on German Jews and German politics during the First World War, and followed two years later by a collection of essays on German Jews in war and revolution edited by Werner Mosse and Arnold Paucker. Crucially, this volume included seminal contributions by Werner Jochmann, Saul Friedländer, and Eva Reichmann.¹³ These histories were written in the context of destruction, as scholars sought to identify antecedents to the genocide of European Jewry put into operation by the Nazis. In general, they portrayed Jews as having been drawn to the liberal political spectrum, and thus in fundamental opposition to German nationalism, a view that continues to dominate histories of German Jewry to this day. In part, this may have been an attempt to explain why the war supposedly led to a hardening of divisions between Jews and non-Jews in German society. Werner Angress' meticulous study of the 'Jew Count,' followed by Ulrich Dunker's examination of the German Jewish war veterans' organization, the *Reichsbund jüdischer*

¹² See for example, Hans Franke, *Geschichte und Schicksal der Juden in Heilbronn vom Mittelalter bis zur Zeit der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung 1050–1945* (Heilbronn: Stadtarchiv, 1963).

Frontsoldaten (RjF), and its efforts to combat antisemitism during the Weimar period, cast further light on the institutionalized prejudice ‘from above,’ and the struggle of Jews to be recognized for their military sacrifices after the war.¹⁴ Together, these histories fed the perception that for Jews, antisemitism was the enduring memory of the war and that the ‘Jew Count’ had been the decisive moment when German Jewish relations unravelled.¹⁵ “The *Juden-zählung*,” as Werner Jochmann concluded, “contributed to a decisive estrangement between Jews and their comrades.”¹⁶

The work of the first generation of German Jewish historians set the foundations onto which others could build. During the late 1970s and into the 1980s, a handful of new histories appeared, but it was only in the 1990s that a second discernible trend in the historiography finally emerged.¹⁷ This body of work placed the ‘Jew Count’ of 1916 at the very center.¹⁸ Studies by Peter Pulzer, Clemens Picht, and Christhard Hoffmann, to name a few, charted a trajectory of the First World War that began with Jewish enthusiasm in 1914, as Jews, along with other Germans, celebrated the war in the belief that it would obliterate antisemitic stereotypes and level any remaining barriers to social equality.¹⁹ Despite volunteering to fight

¹³ Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969); Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker, eds., *Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923* (Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1971).

¹⁴ Werner T. Angress, “The German Army’s ‘Juden-zählung’ of 1916,” 117–37. This is a translation of the original German-language version, which appeared in 1976; Ulrich Dunker, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, 1919–1938. Geschichte eines jüdischen Abwehrvereins* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1977).

¹⁵ George Mosse, *The Jews and the German War Experience, 1914–1918* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1977).

¹⁶ Werner Jochmann, “Ausbreitung des Antisemitismus,” in Werner E. Mosse and Arnold Paucker, eds., *Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916–1923*, (Tübingen; Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 426.

¹⁷ See for example: Rolf Vogel, *Ein Stück von uns. Deutsche Juden in deutschen Armeen 1813–1976. Eine Dokumentation* (Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1977); and Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, ed., *Deutsche jüdische Soldaten 1914–1945* (Freiburg: Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, 1982).

¹⁸ This narrative has persisted in the major scholarship on Jewish service during the First World War; see: Michael Brenner, “The German army orders a census of Jewish soldiers, and Jews defend German culture,” in: *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096–1996*, ed. by Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 348–54;

¹⁹ Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Clemens Picht, “Zwischen Vaterland und Volk: Das deutsche Judentum im Ersten Weltkrieg,” in Wolfgang Michalka, ed., *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1994), 736–55; Christhard Hoffmann, “Between

at the front lines in large numbers, it was argued, Jewish hopes for social acceptance ended disastrously amid increasing antisemitism, culminating in the military's census of October 1916. Further studies by Michael Brenner and Paul Mendes-Flohr on the history of German Jewry during the Weimar Republic similarly portrayed the First World War as having led to an irreparable rift between Jews and other Germans, and that these shattered hopes led to a strengthening of Jewish identity and intensified Jewish solidarity.²⁰

As Derek Penslar has argued, however, much of the scholarship driving this interpretation is predicated on the contemporary writings of Jewish thinkers, activists, and prominent critics of assimilation, such as those of Reinhold Lewin and Ernst Simon.²¹ Both men claimed afterwards that the 'front experience' had been an alienating one for Jews, and that relationships between Jewish and Christian soldiers had been stifled by endemic antisemitism.²² Another frequently quoted source in this narrative is the diary of Julius Marx, a Jewish officer who kept a meticulous journal describing his repeated confrontations with anti-Jewish prejudice at the front.²³ The diary's re-publication in 1964 strongly influenced another generation of scholarly work in this field, and is commonly cited as evidence of Jewish disillusionment during the war.²⁴ Nonetheless, much historical writing on the First

Integration and Rejection: the Jewish Community in Germany, 1914–1918,” in John Horne, ed., *State, Society, and Mobilization in Europe during the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁰ Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Paul Mendes-Flohr, “The *Kriegserlebnis* and Jewish Consciousness,” in Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Jüdisches Leben in der Weimarer Republik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 225–38.

²¹ Derek Penslar, “The German-Jewish Soldier: From Participant to Victim,” *German History* 29 (2011), 445–69.

²² Reinhold Lewin, “Der Krieg als jüdisches Erlebnis,” in *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 63 (1917), 1–14; Ernst Simon, “Unser Kriegserlebnis (1919)” in *Brücken: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Heidelberg, 1965), 17–23.

²³ Julius Marx, *Kriegstagebuch eines Juden* (Frankfurt: Ner-Tamid-Verlag, 1964). Surprisingly, scholarship on German Jewry during the First World War has generally ignored the published diary of Herbert Sulzbach, which provides an interesting counterpoint to Marx. See Herbert A. Sulzbach, *Zwischen zwei Mauern. 50 Monate Westfront 1914–1918* (Berg am See: Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, 1986); English translation: *With the German Guns: Four Years on the Western Front, 1914–1918* (London: Lee Cooper, 1973).

²⁴ For a contemporary analysis of the diary and its impact on scholarship at that time, see Walther Huder, “Kriegs-Tagebuch eines Juden. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Judentums,” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 8 (1965), 240–49.

World War continues to adhere rigidly to the original arguments of Lewin, Simon, and Marx. Without subjecting these sources to rigorous analysis, however, the well-worn narrative of Jewish exclusion established after 1918 is only sustained.²⁵

While examples of antisemitism accurately reflected hatreds and institutional prejudices imposed ‘from above,’ they did not necessarily dominate the narratives of ordinary men and women on the home front and those of the fighting troops in the field, who had much more complex experiences and memories of the war. Perhaps the most serious methodological problem in this corpus of literature is the tendency to view Jewish soldiers through the same analytical lens as civilians or the mainstream Jewish press.²⁶ To be sure, antisemitism drew considerable attention in Jewish newspapers, and it provoked fierce debates among Jewish writers, thinkers, as well as from religious and community leaders in Germany. But analyses of letters and diaries from the field, insofar they had passed the random checks by military censorship (*Militärzensurkommissionen*), have provided little evidence that Jewish / non-Jewish relations at the front lines were in ‘crisis.’²⁷

In the last decade, scholars have searched for a more nuanced view of the First World War that moved beyond the assumption of permanent and omnipresent antisemitism. Greg Caplan, analyzing the writings of Jewish fraternity students during the war, concluded that the trauma of mass death and the horrors of trench warfare, not antisemitism, shaped the shared wartime experiences of both Jews and non-Jews involved in the fighting. These

²⁵ Recent proponents of this interpretation include Martina Steer, “Nation, Religion, Gender: The Triple Challenge of Middle-Class German-Jewish Women in World War I,” *Central European History* 48 (2015), 176–198; Anna Ulrich, “‘Nun sind wir gezeichnet’ – Jüdische Soldaten und die ‘Juden­zählung’ im Ersten Weltkrieg,” in: *Krieg! Juden zwischen den Fronten 1914–1918*, ed. by Ulrike Heikau and Julia B. Köhne (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich Verlag, 2014), 215–38; Peter C. Appelbaum, *Loyalty Betrayed: Jewish Chaplains in the German Army During the First World War* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2014); Michael Berger, “Erster Weltkrieg: ‘Sie fielen fürs Vaterland!’,” in *Jüdische Soldaten- Jüdischer Widerstand in Deutschland und Frankreich*, ed. by Michael Berger and Gideon Römer-Hillebrecht (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012), 89–111; and Rosenthal, *Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*.

²⁶ See further Penslar, “German-Jewish Soldier.”

²⁷ See for example: Brenner, *Renaissance*; Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); and Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society*,

findings were supported by Ulrich Sieg's study of Jewish intellectuals during the war, which concurred that antisemitism was not the driving force between Jews and non-Jews in the front lines, as Jewish soldiers reacted to the 'Jew Count' in often strikingly different ways than their civilian counterparts.²⁸ These studies have added considerable depth to this previously under-researched aspect of Jewish history, and challenged explanatory approaches focused on the 'Jew Count' and narratives of Jewish disillusionment during the war.

Recent research has shown that particular aspects of Jewish military history during the First World War were integrated into a broader context of German history.²⁹ Tim Grady's work on the contested memory of Jewish war experiences argued that relations between Jews and other Germans did not end abruptly after 1918, but instead persisted throughout the Weimar era, even into the early years of the Third Reich.³⁰ Through the rubric of remembrance of the German Jewish war dead, Grady throws light on how Jews and other Germans created a shared memory culture of the First World War, which endured well beyond 1918. The agents of remembrance—memorial construction, local rituals of mourning and commemoration, and conservative narratives of national sacrifice—functioned as mechanisms of inclusion, ensuring that Jews remained actively engaged in Germany's interwar memory culture. David Fine in his monograph on Jews' integration in the German army went even further. He argued that levels of discrimination experienced by Jewish soldiers in the German military had in fact been overstated. Fine maintained that Jewish soldiers rarely mentioned antisemitism in their writings, nor were Jews denied promotions or battlefield decorations that their gentile counterparts received, a claim backed up by official

Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860–1925 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

²⁸ Gregory A. Caplan, "Wicked Sons, German Heroes: Jewish Soldiers, Veterans, and Memories of World War I in Germany" (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 2001); Ulrich Sieg, *Jüdische Intellektuelle im Ersten Weltkrieg. Kriegserfahrungen, weltanschauliche Debatten und kulturelle Neuentwürfe* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2001).

²⁹ For a recent example of this approach, see: Tim Grady, *A Deadly Legacy: German Jews and the Great War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017).

³⁰ Grady, *German-Jewish Soldiers*.

statistics.³¹ While Fine offered a welcome corrective to earlier studies that had solely focused on the development of antisemitism, there can be no denying that anti-Jewish discrimination was an unsavory feature of the war.

Over the last few years, a number of transnational histories have used comparative approaches to draw out the finer nuances of the German Jewish war experience. Works by Derek Penslar and Sarah Panter, as well as a collection of essays connected to an exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Munich, have led the field in this regard.³² These studies attempt to integrate particular aspects of Jewish life into a wider German history of the First World War. Penslar's and Panter's books are emblematic of a recent trend in the scholarship, which sees anti-Semitism as crucial but not in all cases as the main aspect of the Central European Jewish war experience. These authors do not downplay the persistence of antisemitism in the German military: for many Jewish soldiers it was a feature of everyday life. But it did not lead to a breakdown in relations at the front, and there is little evidence that it irrevocably damaged Jewish morale or lessened their faith in the German cause. Over the last five years alone, the field has moved from a post-Mosse consensus on the 'road to the final solution' to a more fragmented view, with many historians considering the 1914–1918 experiences within their contemporary framework, rather than solely in hindsight from 1933.³³

Despite trends in recent scholarship, there are persisting debates about the significance of antisemitism in the context of a reevaluation of German Jewish relationships during the First World War. Many historians continue to uphold older narratives, maintaining that antisemitism was the defining Jewish experience of the First World War. The premise of

³¹ David J. Fine, *Jewish integration in the German army in the First World War* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012).

³² Derek J. Penslar, *Jews and the Military*; Sarah Panter, *Jüdische Erfahrungen und Loyalitätskonflikte im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Ulrike Heikaus and Julia B. Köhne, eds., *Krieg! Juden zwischen den Fronten 1914–1918* (Berlin: Hentrich und Hentrich Verlag, 2014).

³³ The war as a caesura in German-Christian relations is highlighted in George L. Mosse's chapter "On War and Revolution," in *Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978).

Jacob Rosenthal's detailed, well-received study of the 'Jew Count' of 1916 and its consequences in the post-war years follows the trajectory of older studies, which hold that German Jewish relations both during and after the war were undermined by antisemitism. The war is depicted as an end point, the "crisis of the German Jewish symbiosis," as Rosenthal put it, in a long trajectory of failed integration.³⁴ Brian Crim's work on antisemitism in the German military community provides important insights into the RjF's campaign against antisemitism in Weimar Germany, and its tenuous relations with nationalist veterans' organizations. Yet it especially focuses on Jewish exclusion, embracing the notion that Jewish soldiers returned from the front lines in 1918 demoralized by the endemic antisemitism they encountered in the trenches.³⁵

With the centenary of the First World War still reverberating, it is surely time to take stock of the historiographical eras discussed here and to move to a further stage. With this thought in mind, this volume emphasizes the diversity and complexity of Jewish war experiences in Central Europe as well as the multi-faceted forms of antisemitism and responses to it. Relationships between Jews and gentiles, encounters with antisemitism, and memories of the war were complex. As Jay Winter reminds us, the diverse and often contradictory narratives of individuals who experienced 'total war' elude categorization into collective memory paradigms.³⁶ Taken as single voices, they provide a much more subtle way of understanding history than the orchestral piece of grand history narratives. To uncover the varieties of Jewish experiences, this volume explores diverse narratives in their respective medial forms, including literature and film—always with regard to the impact of the erosion

³⁴ Jacob Rosenthal, "Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten." *Die Judenzählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2007), 193.

³⁵ Brian E. Crim, *Antisemitism in the German Military Community and the Jewish Response, 1914–1938* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

³⁶ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 18–22.

of fixed gender roles and the critique of the binary two-sex-model in European societies and academic reflections (e.g. in philosophy, sexology, criminology) around 1900.³⁷

The impact of the war on conceptions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ highlights the degree to which Jewish experiences converged and diverged with mainstream culture. Fulfilling prevailing gender ideals on the combat and home fronts reinforced Jewish men and women’s conceptions of themselves as integrated and accepted members of society. On the one hand, German Jewish frontline soldiers, for example, saw ‘comradeship’ as a universal masculine ideal. Just as gentile and Jewish men shared the traumatic experience of the trenches, they also shared ideals of manliness and comradeship that were fundamental to national identity.³⁸ [insert: image of the hegemonic masculine ideal from contemporary postcard to be included here] The ideal of ‘hard’ militarized masculinity that was ubiquitous in popular culture also had a ‘softer’ side, as soldiers provided each other emotional and psychological support in the traumatic environment of the front.³⁹ Despite a widespread ‘crisis in masculinity’ in the face of industrialized violence, the image of the ‘good comrade,’ who provided friendship and love for their fellow front fighters, gave many men, including minorities who might have been considered social outsiders, the opportunity to assimilate into a male cultural ideal.⁴⁰

³⁷ Sabine Mehlmann, *Unzuverlässige Körper. Zur Diskursgeschichte des Konzepts geschlechtlicher Identität* (Sulzbach/Taunus: Helmer Verlag, 2006), 1–41.

³⁸ German-Jews also ‘performed masculinity’ in German university culture, see Lisa F. Zwicker, “Performing Masculinity: Jewish Students and the Honor Code at German Universities,” in Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman, and Paul Lerner, eds., *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 114–37.

³⁹ Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler’s Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), esp. Chapter 1.

⁴⁰ Monika Szecepaniak, *Militärische Männlichkeiten in Deutschland und Österreich im Umfeld des Großen Krieges* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), 10. On the interwar ‘crisis in masculinity,’ see Birthe Kundrus, “Gender Wars – The First World War and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Weimar Republic,” in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 160. For comparative context on Jewish men seeking assimilation through military service, see Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (New York: Belknap, 2006); for comparison to sexual minorities who embraced the mainstream masculine ideal of comradeship, see Jason Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front: Masculinity, Sexuality and German Soldiers in the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), esp. Ch. 5.

Despite the antisemitic stereotypes circulated on the home front and among military elites during the war, Jewish soldiers often felt a sense of ‘Germanness’ in the front lines through their performance of manly ideals. The essentialist, racialized notion of comradeship and the ‘front community’ later sanctified by the Nazis did not necessarily reflect the more inclusive notions of comradeship and masculinity embraced by not only German Jewish frontline fighters, but even gentile soldiers in 1914–1918.⁴¹ As historian Brian Feltman has demonstrated, even if the rise of National Socialism after 1933 caused German Jewish veterans to later reevaluate their memories of the war, the experience of ‘comradeship’ made them feel that at least between 1914–1918 they had been to some degree accepted.⁴² In addition to pressuring men to conform to male gender ideals, the First World War can be seen as a test field for twisted gender roles and the transgression of traditional notions of ‘manliness’ and ‘femaleness.’ This was not only due to the multiple role reversals in home front societies (at least as long as the war lasted), in which women with regard to their profession slipped into typical male roles,⁴³ but it is also the case for the phenomenon of cross-dressing within theatrical performances in the trenches and internment camps of the First World War, which occurred on all sides of the front.⁴⁴ The soldierly ‘prima donna’ or ‘diva’ of the front theatre—men taking on female roles in an illusionary sphere—were experimental figures providing alternative gender roles that undermined the dominant ideal of the steel-nerved combatant. As such they sent out ambiguous erotic signals, not necessarily with a homosexual undertone, substituting the absent ‘female element’ in war and often reminding the soldiers and officers watching of their beloved ones at home. These complex

⁴¹ On National Socialist racial conceptions of comradeship and masculinity, see George L. Mosse’s *The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), esp. Ch. 8.

⁴² Brian K. Feltman, “Conceptions of Comradeship: Hans H. Pinkus and the Nazification of the Reichsvereinigung ehemaliger Kriegsgefangener,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, March 2016, 163–82. On assimilation through militarized masculinity, see Gregory A. Caplan, “Germanising the Jewish Male: Military Masculinity as the Last Stage of Acculturation,” in Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter, eds., *Towards Normality?: Acculturation of Modern German Jewry* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

⁴³ Birthe Kundrus, “Gender Wars,” 159–179.

gender plays were common features in time of war. They simultaneously contradicted homogenous notions of virility and militarized masculinity and also reproduced hegemonic displays of gender.⁴⁵

Though historians have placed greater attention on the experiences of German Jewish men in the war, Jewish women also felt greater acceptance through their performance of mainstream gender ideals.⁴⁶ Similar to men, women's experiences were much more diverse than previous scholarship would suggest, as diaries and letters by women on the home front reveal the ways in which despite antisemitism, Jewish women, like their gentile counterparts, found new opportunities and spheres for exerting influence and agency while separated from husbands and fathers.⁴⁷ Similar to men, Jewish women were not simply objects of antisemitism. Women's particular experiences demonstrate the degree to which Jewish war experiences were gendered as women's experiences, revealed through their letters and diaries, differed from men's. At the same time, though serving in a different sphere on the home front, women, like their male counterparts, also felt acceptance through their performance of war-time duties. Supporting their husbands, fathers and sons, women experienced a sense of belonging as they contributed to the nation in its moment of crisis under the strains of total war.

This volume also contributes to recent scholarship that uses diverse media forms and regards them as comprehensive and valuable scientific sources in historical research. The idea that historical knowledge is always transmitted in the specific shape of a distinct medium

⁴⁴ L. J. Collins, *Theatre at War, 1914–1918* (Basingstoke: Jade, 2004), 105–182.

⁴⁵ Hermann Pörzgen, *Theater ohne Frau. Das Bühnenleben der kriegsgefangenen Deutschen 1914–1920* (Königsberg/Berlin: Ost-Europa-Verlag, 1933); Martin Baumeister, *Kriegstheater. Großstadt, Front und Massenkultur 1914–1918* (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 2005); Julia B. Köhne, Britta Lange, and Anke Vetter, eds., *MEIN KAMERAD – DIE DIVA. Theater an der Front und in Gefangenenlagern des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2014).

⁴⁶ On Jewish women's assimilation into middle-class culture, see Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

gives some space for the ‘credo’ that the mediality of a concrete historical source—its media specific constitution—needs to be looked at more closely. Thus, medial forms—for example films—which, in the past, have not always been identified as fruitful sources for historiographical reconstructions and the epistemic revaluation of a particular discourse formation, need to be integrated into the broader dynamic of academic knowledge production. For this reason, this volume explores diverse medial narratives, including traditional research objects, written sources like journals, newspaper articles, and monographs, in addition to rather underexplored sites like ego-documents (diary entries, letters from the front, war memoirs) as well as fictional literature, photographs, and motion picture imagery after 1918. Feature films produced in the aftermath of the First World War in particular turn out to be a potent storage medium that communicates personal, psychological as well as cultural and scientific knowledge,⁴⁸ referring to problems like the defeated nation, the horrific effects of mass destruction, traumatic wounds and other mental injuries, dysfunctional post-war relationships, disrupted family values, and fragile gender identities in post-war societies, in a more or less disguised manner.⁴⁹ For example Robert Reinert’s 1919 *Nerven*, a black-and-white silent feature film that has just been restored by the Munich Film Museum, conveys not only a vivid picture of the ‘shattered nerves’ and ‘twisted minds’ of post-World War I conditions in political and social realms on an individual as well as a collective level. It also debates essential themes of contemporary scientific discourses including neuropsychiatry, psychoanalysis, psychopathology, mass psychology, sexology, and it reflects on the 1918/19 revolution and the realm of contemporary political symbolism. Many of these fields, at this time, were dominated by renowned European-Jewish scientists

⁴⁷ Ute Daniel, “Der Krieg der Frauen. Zur Innenansicht des Ersten Weltkriegs in Deutschland,” in Gerhard Hirschfeld, et al., eds. „*Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch*“ ... *Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 1993), 57–177.

⁴⁸ Andreas Killen, *Homo Cinematicus. Science, Motion Pictures, and the Making of Modern Germany* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

and researchers like Sigmund Freud, Hermann Oppenheim, Magnus Hirschfeld⁵⁰—to name just a few. Although European film cultures emerge as an important cultural player that highlight civilian populations' diverse war experiences, they remain relatively silent, with a few exceptions that are addressed in this volume, concerning explicit representations of Jewish war experiences. Nevertheless, this cultural void, gap, or silence in the postwar era points to psychological forces that apparently needed to be suppressed for some time after the war but left their mark in their own way, generating unique iconographies and aesthetics of cultural catastrophe.

Organization and Major Themes

The essays in this volume focus on four interconnected themes, including the larger comparative context of minorities in the imperial German military, various forms of antisemitism in interrelations between Jews and gentiles, the cultural effects of the war on Jews through narrative and visual representation, and memories of war experiences. Part 1 examines the experiences of German Jews in the Imperial Army before and during the Great War. This section posits that German and Austrian-Jewish experiences must be understood in the context of experiences of other minorities to uncover how they were perceived and how they perceived themselves in religious, ethnic and nationalist terms. Part 2 analyzes antisemitism, Jewish-Christian relations and identity formation during the war. This section concentrates on the experiences of 'ordinary' German Jewish men and women who experienced war on the home and combat fronts. Utilizing letters, diaries and memoirs, it complicates existing narratives about the effects of the 'Jew Count' and state-sponsored

⁴⁹ Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁵⁰ Christina von Braun, "Ist die Sexualwissenschaft eine 'jüdische Wissenschaft'? Säkularisierung und die Entstehung der Sexualwissenschaft," in Willi Jasper and Joachim H. Knoll, eds., *Preußens Himmel breitet seine Sterne Beiträge zur*

antisemitism. Incorporating gender as a category of analysis, Part 2 also explores the ways in which men and women exerted agency in defining themselves as active members of front communities, and how these experiences convinced them that they were accepted into mainstream culture.

Cultural representations of the war in previously underexamined layers of literary and cinematic sources are the focus of Part 3. Moving away from strictly soldiers' narratives of the war experience, this section sheds light on how German Jews in diverse communities imagined and narrated the effects of the war. This includes analysis of not only how the war affected Jewish life, but also how the lens of Jewish culture shaped perceptions of the war. Part 4 builds on this with analysis of contested memories of the war. In addition to analyzing war remembrance through Jewish literature, this section also offers innovative approaches to how survivors defined and remembered the psychological and emotional effects of war trauma. Contributors place these memories within the context of both Jewish culture and the broader trends in political, medical and cultural memory production.

Central European Jewish experiences in the First World War need to be analyzed in a broader international and comparative context. To what degree were the experiences and treatment of German and Austrian-Jews in the Great War similar or dissimilar to the experiences of minorities in different nations and chronological contexts? This is a question addressed by Christine Krüger in Chapter 1, who compares the experiences of German and French Jews in the 1870/71 War and in 1914–1918. Compared to French Jews, Krüger argues, German Jews felt a greater sense of ambivalence about their participation in the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War. In France, a notion of citizenship based on voluntarism predominated, in contrast with an ethno-cultural conception of Jewish identity

Kultur-, Politik- und Geistesgeschichte der Neuzeit, vol. 2 (Hildesheim et al.: Olms Verlag, 2002), 697–714.

that governed the social and legal status of German Jews. These differences in defining the status of Jews would play an essential role in shaping Jewish war experiences.

This volume further expands this comparative national context by examining the experiences of Jewish soldiers in the Habsburg Army during the Great War. As a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic force, consisting to Austrians, Hungarians, Czechs, and other groups, the Habsburg Army offers a fascinating case study into how Jews, who served on all fronts and in diverse capacities, were perceived and perceived themselves.⁵¹ The Habsburg army classified its soldiers by nationality rather than ethnicity, so Jewish soldiers were never given any official designation. Yet in her analysis of the everyday experiences of Jewish soldiers in Chapter 2, Tamara Scheer demonstrates that despite the lack of official recognition, soldiers were still unofficially recognized as Jewish. Especially as the war effort deteriorated, both the military and civilians blamed Jews, laying the groundwork for an imposed antisemitic stereotype that permeated culture on the home and combat fronts. Scheer emphasizes that this external identity formation of Jews as ‘scapegoats’ shaped how ‘Jewishness’ was understood in the Habsburg Empire.

In addition to comparative international contexts, this first section of the volume also compares the experiences of German Jews to other minorities within the German army. To what degree did prejudices against German Jews mirror prejudices against other groups. Devlin Scofield addresses this question in Chapter 3 by illuminating the experiences of Alsatian soldiers in the Imperial Army. He argues that German Alsations’ war experiences were very similar to those of German Jews, as both faced increased surveillance, exclusion from certain duties, and restrictions on leave, despite data collected by officials that proved pro-French sympathies among Alsations were exaggerated. Scofield focuses on letters by Alsatian-German soldiers to reconstruct their attempts to prove their national loyalty. The

experience of being treated as second-class disillusioned otherwise loyal Alsatian-German soldiers in a way similar to the growing disillusionment felt by many German Jews who were treated as ‘outsiders’ in their own nation.

The second section of the book shifts focus to the experiences of German Jewish men and women on the combat and home fronts. Their encounters with antisemitism, responses to war trauma, and feelings of belonging and ‘comradeship’ reveal complex boundaries between exclusion and acceptance. In Chapter 4, Michael Geheran challenges the notion that Jewish experiences can be reduced to a singular Jewish *Kriegserlebnis* by examining and contrasting the frontline experiences of acculturated, Zionist, and Orthodox Jewish soldiers during the First World War. Geheran uses diaries, letters and other contemporary primary sources by Jewish soldiers to argue that while antisemitism affected Jewish soldiers in their everyday relations with Christian comrades, these groups responded to it often dramatically different ways. Geheran’s chapter is important because, unlike prevailing scholarship, which has analyzed Jewish experiences primarily through the lens of acculturated Jewry, Jewish soldiers’ cultural and religious identity – specifically whether they regarded themselves as ‘Germans of Jewish faith’ or primarily as Jews - was crucial in shaping not only their expectations and perceptions during the war, but also how they remembered it afterwards. It governed why they fought, how they perceived and reacted to antisemitism, and it also influenced how they related to their gentile fellow soldiers, without which their memory of the First World War cannot be understood.

The ambivalent relationship between ‘being German’ and ‘being Jewish’ can also be examined in the transnational context beyond the trench experience. In Chapter 5, Sarah Panter compares the ambivalent relationship between ‘being German’ and ‘being Jewish’ to the experiences of German minorities in other parts of the world, including Britain and the

⁵¹ Rozenblit, *Reconstructing National Identity*; see also Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rozenblit,

United States. She identifies a number of similarities regarding classification of Jewish citizens and immigrants as ‘aliens’ or ‘enemies.’⁵² Panter explores how ‘Jewishness’ and ‘Germanness’ were interpreted as compatible markers of their multiple and situational identities.⁵³ Paradoxically, where Jews in German-speaking countries had to fight for acceptance and inclusion into the German nation, Jews in English-speaking countries were stigmatized as ‘German’ under the formula that ‘Jewishness’ equaled ‘Germanness.’ Panter reveals just how fluid meanings of ‘Jewish’ and ‘German’ really were from different relational and cultural contexts, as Jews were ascribed multiple cultural identities.

Home front experiences of women are the focal point of Chapters 6 and 7. Andrea Sinn and Sabine Hank show that in contrast to much of the existing scholarship that often constructs German Jews as objects of antisemitism, a much more diverse picture of Jewish experiences and agency emerges through the lens of women’s experiences. Sinn finds in Chapter 6 that despite continued antisemitism, the war created new opportunities for Jewish integration. Similar to Geheran, she utilizes letters, diaries and other wartime sources from archives to offer new perspectives on the interplay of gender, politics and war. In particular, she demonstrates that the infamous ‘Jew Count’ was largely a gendered event that did not resonate in women’s war-time autobiographical writings. In Chapter 7, Hank highlights the experiences of women who occupied positions of status and relative power in war relief organizations, where they played an influential role in welfare, education, and health care programs. As these programs expanded exponentially in the context of total war, so did women’s status as they volunteered in advisory positions in the Jewish community’s efforts to contribute to the nation’s victory.

In Chapter 8, Jason Crouthamel continues the volume’s concentration on war-time

eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

⁵² See, for example, Daniela L. Caglioti, ed., *Aliens and Internal Enemies during the First World War* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2014).

letters and diaries to analyze gentile and Jewish soldiers' ideals of 'comradeship' in the war.⁵⁴ This universal experience, Crouthamel argues, fuelled German Jewish soldiers' sense of optimism about integration, which was rooted in a complex interchange between how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived by comrades. Like Geheran and Sinn, Crouthamel's chapter complicates the history of antisemitism by showing that the 'Jew Count' had little bearing on everyday life at the front. To illustrate the complex front experience for Jewish men, Crouthamel compares letters and diaries of Jewish soldiers to those of their gentile comrades, which reveal a wide range of philosemitic and antisemitic sentiments, suggesting that German Jewish soldiers' optimism about being accepted as 'good comrades' was not entirely illusory.

Representations of the war experience in letters, diaries and memoirs are only one dimension of narratives on the war experience. The war had a profound impact on virtually all layers of cultural production, including literature and cinema.⁵⁵ In the aftermath of mass violence, films became a site for debates over national memory, the meaning of loss, and competing interpretations of the war experience.⁵⁶ While some of the most familiar interwar films like *Westfront 1918. Vier von der Infanterie (Western Front 1918)* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (both 1930) illustrate the brutalizing effects of the front experience on soldiers, cinema also reflected the traumatic consequences of occupation and mass expulsion, including mass migrations of Jewish communities. Many of these relatively unknown films are lost, but remarkably, some rare examples of cinematic representations of Jewish civilians survive in archives. These are uncovered in Chapter 9 by Philipp Stiasny, who expands our focus to include the experiences of Eastern European Jewish civilians. Exploring feature

⁵³ On 'situational ethnicity' to German-Jewish identities, see Till van Rahden, *Jews and other Germans*.

⁵⁴ On the sociological significance of 'comradeship' in German society during the age of total war, see Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship*.

⁵⁵ Philipp Stiasny, *Das Kino und der Krieg. Deutschland 1914–1929* (Munich: Edition Text, 2009).

⁵⁶ See for example Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema*.

films from the 1920s that deal with the Jewish population in Galicia, Stiasny poses several interrelated questions: What kinds of stories were told? How have these films been received in the public? How do they relate to other films about the war? He argues that these films gave space and voice to the perspective of civilians, in particular the Jewish population, engulfed in war. Thus this chapter reveals another layer of Jewish voices in representing the effects of the war, as well as perceptions of that population through the relatively new media of cinema.

Literary representations of Jewish war experiences are also underutilized by historians, yet these sources yield an important glimpse into the effects of the war on soldiers and civilian Jewish communities. In Chapter 10, Glenda Abramson dissects the boundaries between historical truth and fiction in her analysis of novels by Shmuel Yosef Agnon that deal with the social and psychological impact of the war. Abramson argues that in his reflections on the impact of the war on the home front in Leipzig, Agnon combines autobiography and imaginative constructions of memory, providing a kind of valediction of the old world of Jewish culture destroyed by the war. Exploring how these narratives fuse fiction with historical reality, Abramson sheds light on how the memory of the war was constructed through the lens of Jewish identity.

Some of the most important recent scholarship on the impact of the Great War has focused on the psychological dimensions of the modern war experience. Expanding our knowledge of the brutalizing effects of the war, historians have explored complex everyday coping mechanisms and emotional responses to violence.⁵⁷ The multi-faceted psychological effects of the war also shook mental medicine and its capacity for diagnosing and treating

⁵⁷ On the emotional effects of mass violence, see Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); on constructions of masculinity in response to emotional stress, see Jason Crouthamel, *An Intimate History of the Front*, especially Ch. 4; on the history of emotions in shaping the war, see Ute Frevert, *Emotions and History-Lost and Found* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2011).

‘war neurosis.’⁵⁸ In Chapter 11, Julia B. Köhne reveals the crucial role played by German Jewish scholars in studying the effects of the war on the psyches of front veterans.⁵⁹ She analyzes the illuminating case study of Paul Plaut, a former Jewish front veteran and psychologist who investigated the effects of the war on the ‘soul of soldiers,’ including their emotional, religious and psycho-sexual responses to the trench experience. Plaut’s work was part of the military’s larger aim to rationalize and economize the combat readiness of front soldiers.⁶⁰ At the same time, Köhne reveals that Plaut’s 1920 work “Psychographie des Kriegers” (“Psychography of the Warrior”) was exceptional in revealing the fragile inner life of soldiers with extraordinary frankness. Köhne’s chapter thus puts Plaut’s work in two overlapping contexts: both as an example of a German Jewish soldier’s particular encounter with the psycho-traumatic effects of war and his intellectual sensitization for them, and as an example of an experimental psychologist who tried to transform the impact of mass violence and its pre-conditions into scientific knowledge.

Jewish survivors confronted and expressed their memories of the war through diverse media. On one hand, German Jewish memory construction can be placed in the larger context of interwar political fragmentation over the meaning of the war experience.⁶¹ As many of the

⁵⁸ On the diagnosis of ‘war neurosis’, see Paul Lerner *Hysterical Men – History, Psychiatry and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Hans-Georg Hofer, *Nervenschwäche und Krieg – Modernitätskritik und Kriegsbewältigung in der österreichischen Psychiatrie, 1880–1920* (Wien: Boehlau Verlag, 2004); on medial representations of ‘war hysterics’ see Julia Barbara Köhne, *Kriegshysteriker: Strategische Bilder und mediale Techniken militärpsychiatrischen Wissens, 1914–1920* (Husum: Matthiesen, 2009); Julia Barbara Köhne, “Visualizing ‘War Hysterics’ -- Strategies of Feminization and Re-Masculinization in Scientific Cinematography, 1916–1918,” in Christa Hämmerle, Oswald Überegger, and Birgitta Bader Zaar, eds., *Gender and the First World War* (Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 72–88; on the psychological impact of the war on soldiers and civilians, see Jason Crouthamel and Peter Leese, eds., *Psychological Trauma and the Legacies of the First World War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁵⁹ On the central role of German-Jewish psychiatrist Hermann Oppenheim in medical debates over the diagnosis and treatment of mental trauma, see Paul Lerner, “From Traumatic neurosis to Male Hysteria: The Decline and Fall of Hermann Oppenheim, 1889–1919,” in Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner, eds., *Traumatic Pasts. History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 140–171.

⁶⁰ Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 5.

⁶¹ One of the most important studies on the memory of the war is George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

chapters in this volume attest, German Jews largely saw their own experiences as intertwined with broader experiences of ‘comradeship,’ nationalism, traumatic memory and other social-psychological effects of war. At the same time, the war experiences of German Jews were treated as a separate sphere, distinct and excluded from the mainstream narratives that constructed ‘front communities’ and ‘national communities.’ This is explored with new insight in Chapter 12 by Florian Brückner, who analyzes the place of Jews in the political debates over the war, with a focus on one of the most popular sites of memory construction, the war novel. War fiction provides an ideal site for analyzing how Jews were perceived within the larger narrative of a unified ‘front community’ (*Frontgemeinschaft*), which later became the basis for the National Socialist conception of the ‘national community’ (*Volksgemeinschaft*).⁶² Brückner analyzes some of the most popular interwar right-wing nationalist literature to assess how Jews were portrayed and how Jews received these works. He argues that during the Weimar-era, the war novel actually afforded German Jews an avenue to integrate themselves into the conservative-nationalist narrative of the ‘front community,’ and that it was not until the Nazis came to power in 1933 that literary depictions of the war experience became increasingly infused with antisemitic stereotypes. Thus Brückner’s essay reveals how the memory of the trenches was not static, but an ever-evolving narrative from inclusive to more exclusive treatment of minorities who shared the ‘front experience.’ For the ‘coda’ to the volume we invited Derek Penslar to share perspectives on the field, as his book *Jews and the Military: A History* influenced the approaches of many contributors to this study. Penslar points to key issues and new methodologies that still need to be explored, and he reflects on changing developments in the history of German Jewish men and women in the First World War.

⁶² On constructions of the ‘national community’ and its social-political significance, see Lisa Pine,

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