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978-1-107-03513-3 - The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain

Michal Shapira

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The War Inside

The War Inside is a groundbreaking history of the contribution of British psychoanalysis to the making of social democracy, childhood, and the family during World War II and the postwar reconstruction. Psychoanalysts informed understandings not only of individuals, but also of broader political questions. By asserting a link between a real “war outside” and an emotional “war inside,” psychoanalysts contributed to an increased state responsibility for citizens’ mental health. They made understanding children and the mother–child relationship key to the successful creation of a democratic citizenry. Using rich archival sources, the book revises the common view of psychoanalysis as an elite discipline by taking it out of the clinic and into the war nursery, the juvenile court, the state welfare committee, and the children’s hospital. It traces the work of the second generation of psychoanalysts after Freud in response to total war and explores its broad postwar effects on British society.

MICHAL SHAPIRA is Assistant Professor of History and Gender Studies at Tel Aviv University. Her research deals with the domestic, socio-cultural, crossnational and imperial legacies of World War II in Britain and beyond.

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In memory of my relatives who were murdered by the Nazis in 1941–1942 in the area of Eastern Europe where the family had lived for centuries: my great-grandparents, Zelda Fenster (Sussman) (b. 1890, homemaker and farmer), Mayer Yacob Sussman (b. 1877 or 1880, merchant and farmer), and Faiga-Tzipora Just (b. 1871, homemaker); and my great-aunts, Toba (b. 1908, tailor), Eta (b. 1916 [or 1922], tailor), and Rachel Fenster (Sussman) (b. 1923), and Temma Tanenbaum (and her family) (b. 1896, homemaker).

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