

THE QUEST FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

What does it mean to see oneself as free? And how can this freedom be attained in times of conflict and social upheaval? In this ambitious study, Moritz Föllmer explores what twentieth-century Europeans understood by individual freedom and how they endeavored to achieve it. Combining cultural, social, and political history, this book highlights the tension between ordinary people's efforts to secure personal independence and the ambitious attempts of thinkers and activists to embed notions of freedom in political and cultural agendas. The quest to be a free individual was multifaceted; no single concept predominated. Men and women articulated and pursued it against the backdrop of two world wars, the expanding power of the state, the constraints of working life, preestablished moral norms, the growing influence of America, and uncertain futures of colonial rule. But although claims to individual freedom could be steered and stymied, they could not, ultimately, be suppressed.

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A Twentieth-Century European History

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