War and Childhood in the Era of the Two World Wars

The histories of modern war and childhood were the result of competing urgencies. According to ideals of childhood widely accepted throughout the world by 1900, children should have been protected, even hidden, from conflict and danger. Yet at a time when modern ways of childhood became increasingly possible for economic, social, and political reasons, it became less possible to fully protect children in the face of massive industrialized warfare driven by geopolitical rivalries and expansionist policies. Taking a global perspective, the chapters in this volume examine a wide range of experiences and places. In addition to showing how the engagement of children and youth with war differed according to geography, technology, class, age, race, gender, and the nature of the state, they reveal how children acquired agency during the twentieth century’s greatest conflicts.

Mischa Honeck teaches US and transatlantic history at the Humboldt University of Berlin. He was a research fellow at the German Historical Institute Washington and is the author of Our Frontier Is the World: The Boy Scouts in the Age of American Ascendancy (2018).

James Marten was one of the founders of the Society for the History of Children and Youth and its president from 2013 to 2015. He edited the Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth from 2013 to 2018. His book The Children’s Civil War (1998) was named an “Outstanding Academic Title” by Choice.
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Edited by

Simone Lässig

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Edited by

MISCHA HONECK
German Historical Institute, Washington, DC

JAMES MARTEN
Marquette University, Wisconsin

German Historical Institute, Washington, DC,
and

Cambridge University Press
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Contributors

Valentina Boretti, Department of History, School of History, Religions and Philosophies, SOAS University of London

Julie K. deGraffenried, Department of History, Baylor University

Antje Harms, Collaborative Research Centre “Otium. Boundaries, Chronotopes, Practices,” University of Freiburg

Mischa Honeck, Historical Seminar, Humboldt University Berlin

Robert Jacobs, Hiroshima Peace Institute, Hiroshima City University

Kate James, St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford

Esbjörn Larsson, Department of Education, Uppsala University

Nazan Maksudyan, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin

James Marten, Department of History, Marquette University

L. Halliday Piel, Department of History, Lasell College

Manon Pignot, Center for the History of Societies, Sciences, and Conflicts, University of Picardy Jules Verne

Karl D. Qualls, Department of History, Dickinson College

Patricia Heberer Rice, The Jack, Joseph and Morten Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Kara L. Ritzheimer, Department of History, Oregon State University

Birgitte Søland, Department of History, The Ohio State University
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