



Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany 1918-1923

Robert G. Waite

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Vanguard of Nazism is the first full history of the Free Corps Movement which arose in Germany after World War I. Robert Waite's closely documented account shows how proto-Nazi thinking developed in this movement, and how the Free Corp contributed to the growth of National Socialism.

The Free Corps Movement had its origins in the pre-war youth movement and on the battlefields of the war. The returning soldiers, embittered by defeat, believing themselves betrayed by a cowardly government, and psychologically incapable of demobilizing, formed into volunteer bands throughout Germany. These groups, immensely powerful by 1919, were hired by the newly established Weimar Republic to fight against the Communists. They fought for the Republic (which they despised) from Munich to Berlin, from Düsseldorf to the Baltic. When the Republic tried to disband them, they went underground until they emerged in Hitler's Germany.

The savage actions and warped ideology of the men whom Hermann Goering called "the first soldiers of the Third Reich" are revealed in this book by contemporary newspaper accounts, government documents, and previously untranslated memoirs of the Free Corp fighters themselves. With this material, Mr. Waite substantiates the thesis that National Socialism began in the months and years immediately following World War I, and that the history of the Free Corps Movement--its ideas, attitudes, and organization--is an indispensable part of Germany's history in the inter-war period and the Second World War.



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