



Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism

Jelena Suboti

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Jelena Suboti's *Yellow Star, Red Star* examines postwar views of the Holocaust in Eastern Bloc countries.

In 1941, a nineteen-year-old Jewish nurse entered the Semlin labor camp of her own free will, eager to care for others but certain she would return home soon. Within four months, she and 6,300 other camp detainees were murdered. Today, the camp's unmarked ruins lie along a dead end road in Belgrade, a site termed "a place of no memory."

Opening on this forgotten place, the book introduces its main theme: while the Holocaust is viewed as a singular tragedy in the West, countries that came under Communist control framed Stalin's reign of terror as a larger, overshadowing event. The Holocaust has been all but erased as a distinct event in such places; memories and feelings rooted in it transferred to Stalinism instead. Suboti calls this "memory appropriation" and posits reasons why it still persists.

At its strongest in demonstrating the split between Eastern European and Western views, the book draws upon a variety of sources, including scholarly research, personal interviews, historic records, and visits to countries involved. A comparison of nations across the Eastern Bloc reveals differences from country to country but establishes their general split from Western views. Underlying causes are proposed in a credible way, but they are harder to prove.

Passionate, knowledgeable, and precise, the book's complex investigations and arguments call for pursuing a unified view of Holocaust history, while its country-by-country guide highlights the current politics and cultures of the places investigated, in which memory appropriation still occurs.

Yellow Star, Red Star approaches Holocaust studies from a post-Communist perspective and is an important contribution to the historical canon.

SUSAN WAGGONER (November / December 2019)

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