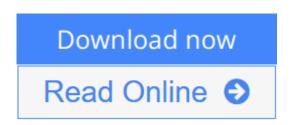


The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust

By Tom Segev



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The Seventh Million is the first book to show the decisive impact of the Holocaust on the identity, ideology, and politics of Israel. Drawing on diaries, interviews, and thousands of declassified documents, Segev reconsiders the major struggles and personalities of Israel's past, including Ben-Gurion, Begin, and Nahum Goldmann, and argues that the nation's legacy has, at critical moments--the *Exodus* affair, the Eichmann trial, the case of John Demjanjuk--have been molded and manipulated in accordance with the ideological requirements of the state. *The Seventh Million* uncovers a vast and complex story and reveals how the bitter events of decades past continue to shape the experiences not just of individuals but of a nation. Translated by Haim Watzman.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Segev (1949: The First Israelis, LJ 2/1/86), a highly respected Israeli journalist-historian, presents a compelling work of scholarship. This tour de force draws on previously untapped archival sources, including thousands of unpublished and recently declassified documents and scores of personal interviews. Segev belongs to the generation of Israelis about which, in part, he writes. He portrays dramatically how the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine prior to 1948) faced the challenges of Nazi Germany and wartime Zionist politics as well as the subsequent impact of the Holocaust on Israeli society. Segev unearths and probes a range of disturbing and delicate historical issues, raising important questions about the use and misuse of Holocaust instruction to today's Israeli youth--a generation born after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. This path-breaking volume will enrich any public or academic collection on Israel, Zionism, or the Holocaust.

- Mark A. Raider, Brandeis Univ., Waltham, Mass. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Kirkus Reviews

An unflattering examination of how political positions have shaped Israeli attitudes toward the Holocaust. Segev (1949: The First Israelis, 1986) covers world events for Ha'aretz, a leading Israeli newspaper. The "seventh million" is Segev's metaphor for the yishuv (the Jewish population of Palestine and, later, Israel), still grappling to come to terms with the memory of the six million Jews exterminated by Hitler. In his telling--based on thousands of archival documents and numerous interviews--the Holocaust became a political football in the hands of the various factions that continue to plague Israel. Few idols are left unscathed here--not Chaim Weizmann, not Ben-Gurion, not Menachem Begin. Zionists like Ben-Gurion, Segev says, had only scorn for the ,migr,s who managed to escape from Germany to Palestine before WW II, and for Jews throughout the world who opted for what the Israeli leader considered the false security of their native lands instead of flocking to Palestine to build up the Homeland. Early settlers resented the ``yekkes"--their disparaging term for German immigrants--for their individualistic, capitalistic notions, so different from the communal, socialist ideals of the Zionist pioneers. Efforts to spirit Jews out of Europe during and after the war, Segev contends, were generally guided by political considerations as each faction shamefully focused on bringing in only those individuals who might strengthen its own position. Similarly, the trials of Adolf Eichmann and John Demjanjuk have become skirmishes in factional battles to gain advantage from the Holocaust. Segev concludes with the hope that the lesson of the Holocaust will, in the end, be a humanist one--accepting the need to preserve democracy, to fight racism, to defend human rights, and to refuse to obey manifestly illegal orders. But he acknowledges that this lesson will be difficult to learn as long as Israel must fight to defend itself and to justify its very existence. A powerful and disturbing book, sure to arouse heated debate. (Photographs) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Superb... Throws new light on the central trauma of Israeli society, and the uses and abuses of this trauma for political manipulation. I, for one, learned from this book that, in order to survive, societies must learn not only to remember but also to forget." *?Amos Elon, author of Founders and Sons*

"This book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in Israel's self-image and identity . . . Any further discussion of the Holocaust must confront Tom Segev's work." ?George L. Mosse, author of Nazi Culture

"Frank and eye-opening . . . A valuable addition." ?Lawrence L. Langer, The New York Times Book Review

"Richly documented and written with great passion." ?Elie Wiesel, Los Angeles Times Book Review

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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