Willis Buhle's Bookshelf

For Midwest Book Review

January, 2022

And Still We Rise

Jordan Steven Sher

Atmosphere Press

[https://atmospherepress.com](https://atmospherepress.com/)

9781639881161, $18.99, PB, 312pp

<https://www.amazon.com/Still-We-Rise-Genocide-Bosnia/dp/1639881166>

Synopsis: Based on real-life events that took place in Prijedor, Bosnia during the spring of 1992, "And Still We Rise" by author Jordan Steven Sher is the story of the Kovacevic's, a Muslim family, who are confronted with the harsh reality that they have become the targets of a brutally lethal campaign to rid the country of non-Serbs. Neighbors turn on neighbors as the nationalist Serb propaganda leads to the so-called "cleansing" of communities that destroys families and their homes.

Elvir, and his fifteen-year-old son Amir, are sent to the Omarska concentration camp where torture and death haunt them daily. With a world that turns a blind eye, both suffer physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Yet they must rely upon each other if they are to survive.

Hajra, Elvir's wife, and mother of their two younger children, Halima and Danis, are imprisoned in another camp called Trnopolje. They, too, must survive the atrocities that visit them including rape and witnessing beatings and murder. Hajra and the children encounter Elvir's brother, Tarik, who has been transferred to Trnopolje from another camp, only to see him disappear a short time later. As they all have learned too well in the camps, many disappear never to return.

The Kovacevic's eventually leave the camps and reconnect with Tarik's wife, Merjem, who is unable to accept the possibility of the loss of her husband. The families' trajectories lead them to journey together as they face unforeseen obstacles that must be overcome if they are to find true freedom from the trauma that continues to inform their decisions.

As refugees, they move to Germany and then to America seeking to rediscover meaning in their lives after surviving genocide, grieving their losses, and to place roots in their new home.

Critique: A deftly crafted, completely riveting and brutally honest novel based upon the genocide perpetrated against the Muslim communities in Bosnia, "And Still We Rise" is a compelling and fact based novel that is timely and timeless given the current ethnic conflicts taking place around the globe. While also readily available for personal reading lists in a digital book format (Kindle, $7.99), "And Still We Rise' is especially and unreservedly recommended for community, college, and university library General Fiction collections.

Willis M. Buhle

Reviewer