



Stealing Home: Looting, Restitution, and Reconstructing Jewish Lives in France, 1942-1947

Shannon L. Fogg

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Between 1942 and 1944 the Germans sealed and completely emptied at least 38,000 Parisian apartments. The majority of the furnishings and other household items came from 'abandoned' Jewish apartments and were shipped to Germany. After the war, Holocaust survivors returned to Paris to discover their homes completely stripped of all personal possessions or occupied by new inhabitants. In 1945, the French provisional government established a Restitution Service to facilitate the return of goods to wartime looting victims. Though time-consuming, difficult, and often futile, thousands of people took part in these early restitution efforts. *Stealing Home* demonstrates that attempts to reclaim one's furnishings and personal possessions were key in efforts to rebuild Jewish political and social inclusion in the war's wake. Far from remaining silent, Jewish survivors sought recognition of their losses, played an active role in politics, and turned to both the government and each other for aid. Drawing on memoirs, oral histories, restitution claims, social workers' reports, newspapers, and government documents, *Stealing Home* provides a social history of the period that focuses on Jewish survivors' everyday lives during the lengthy process of restoring citizenship and property rights. It examines social rebirth through the prism of restitution and argues that the home was critical in shaping the postwar relationship between Jews and the state, and in the successes and failures associated with rebuilding Jewish lives in France after the Holocaust.

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