

# History Access Reading Group

Meet with Professor James Felak to discuss

*Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-1968*

by Heda Margolius Kovály

Thursday, December 4

1:30 – 3:20

Smith 306

The book is available at the UW bookstore in the textbook section in the basement.

They are on aisle 40 (under HSTEU 432) or ask at the desk.

Used copies are also available through [bn.com](http://bn.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Some questions to consider:

How does Kovály depict the resistance movement that developed in Prague near the end of the War?

What were the reasons why Kovály, and many other Czechs, supported or at least did not oppose Communism in the years immediately following the Second World War?

What sort of people, according to Kovály, were joining the Czechoslovak Communist Party after 1945?

Kovály writes that "People who are ready to sacrifice their own well-being for some lofty goal are likely to exact a similar sacrifice from others who are not so willing. A political system which cannot function without martyrs is a bad, destructive system." Do you agree with her?

What does Kovály's memoir teach us about the purge trials, and about life in Stalinist Czechoslovakia?

What do the events of the Prague Spring of 1968 mean to her?