"easy reading" and escapist literature, to boost wartime morale. The landscape of bestsellers so comprehensively surveyed by Adam reminds us of Hartmut Berghoff's observation that the cumulative effect of the regime's consumer policies led to both enticement and deprivation of consumers. Nazi authorities oversaw the suppression of consumption in some areas, combined with widespread distribution of key goods such as radios in selected high-profile areas. Readers were deprived of books by many of the most important authors of the period: Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig, and Lion Feuchtwanger are only some of the best-known examples. But at the same time, German readers were enticed by "easy reading" and entertainment-oriented literature, including mass print runs of paperbacks and pulp magazines for soldiers, paid for by the Wehrmacht. Adam concludes that, as a result, "almost the entire elite of German writers had been driven into exile or silenced. The actors in the second row now took their place and filled it – rather badly" (266).

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Hitler's Refugees and the French Response, 1933–1938

By Julius Fein. Lanham and Boulder: Lexington Books, 2021. Pp. 246. Cloth $120.00. ISBN: 978-1793622280.

Nicole Dombrowski Risser

Towson University

Hitler's Refugees is, in one sense, independent scholar Julius Fein's personal search for the policy origins of his own family's refugee odyssey during the Second World War. After his father lost the right to practice law in Germany, Fein fled with his family, first to Britain, then to New York. He returned later to Britain and eventually pursed a professional career as a trader. A beneficiary of wartime asylum, Fein digs deeply into the French asylum policies that saved tens of thousands of mostly German Jews but excluded just as many. Fein's deeply researched book narrates the struggle and tensions between France's ideological tradition, dating from the Montagnard constitution of 1793 that attempted to establish France as a humanitarian country of asylum for the persecuted, and the Third Republic's Foreign Office, the Quai D'Orsay's practices to defend France's position as a sovereign state and practice nonintervention into the Third Reich's domestic persecution policies. From the beginning of the German refugee crisis in 1933 until 1938, when the French government established a dedicated bureau of refugees and began the strict application of the narrowest refugee admissions criteria, Fein traces the intricate policy negotiations between France's Foreign Ministry (the Quai); the League of Nations (LON); its neglected stepchild, the High Commission for Refugees from Germany (HCR) led by the American James G. McDonald; and key member states. A diplomatic and legal history in the main, *Hitler's Refugees* carefully and accessibly details the play-by-play negotiations undertaken by the Quai to balance France's claim to be an open and generous country of asylum with the Quai's abiding desire to safeguard France's fragile post-1929 economy and defend the nation's status as a sovereign state from liberal interpretations of international agreements and foreign pressure groups.

A strength of the book's policy-laden narrative is the author's ability to sketch out the actions and motivations of a few key players whose philosophies and intervention strategies had a deep impact on the French approach to limiting refugee asylum. Although one of Fein's

main arguments is that lifetime civil servants at the Quai had far greater and contiguous impact on refugee policy than did politicians going through the revolving door of interwar governments, one politician's mark is noted throughout. President of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Henry Bèrenger remained committed throughout the period to the position that France should not be a final relocation point for German refugees. He pushed for their transit to the United Kingdom, Palestine, or elsewhere. Moreover, Bèrenger belonged to the camp of policymakers who wished to refuse refugees from the East, for example Poland, from claiming refugee status as Germans and moving to France. This camp held to the belief that Jewish refugees were unassimilable, unwilling to work in agriculture, and that the Eastern refugees were unable to maintain financial independence. Other, more liberal government officials, like Joseph Paganon, believed refugees could be naturalized, contingent upon military service to France.

Fein insists too that the Quai's monopoly on the formulation of national refugee policy was unique among Western governments. In part, this was due to the Quai's success in waging turf wars against other ministries such as the Interior Ministry, led by a variety of differently motivated politicians during the interwar period. The political parties hospitable to refugees of their ilk did have limited success welcoming their German counterparts. Near the Saar border and in Strasbourg, the socialist and communist parties established help centers, aiding refugees with paperwork and material assistance. Interestingly, the refugee question fueled an ongoing disagreement among politicians about the need to create a Ministry for Immigration. The Quai stood opposed, and Prime Minister Edouard Daladier felt similarly that the Quai was well-motivated to stop the flow of the highly feared clandestine Eastern refugees from accessing France, strengthening a tough stance on immigration. Despite this position, the decree of September 1936 amnestied 4,000 clandestine refugees who had entered France illegally, an act that coincided with the Léon Blum government's creation in 1936 of the *Comité consultative pour les refugiés d'Allemagne*.

In reality, Easterners were not overrepresented among the early asylum seekers. Reports estimated the diversity of the German refugee population, which gave different French camps constituencies to cheer for or object to. Among the 71,700 German nationals estimated to be living in France in 1933—before successive waves gained momentum—reports estimated that 9,000 were intellectuals, 5,500 were communists, 250 were Catholics, 500 were pacifists, and 3,000 were Social Democrats. Fein helpfully provides a few key profiles of some of these refugees. One of the more active German Jewish *émigrés* in France was Willi Münzenberg, who created an antifascist agitprop foundation. Among his other activities, he created the Freedom Library in Paris. The library housed copies of books banned by the Nazi regime. The fact that nearly all the German refugees were anti-Nazis, however, held little sway with the Quai, which feared, as did Paris police chief Jean Chiappe, that the German refugees would stoke tensions between France and Germany.

Running throughout Fein's study is documentation of the persistent tension between universal and contingent definitions of refugees and asylum policies. In exploring the debate on the protection of minorities, codified by LON treaties in the aftermath of World War I, examining *refoulement*—forced expulsion of refugees from host countries – and describing issues of states and international institutions' interventions in the domestic policies of sovereign countries, Fein does an excellent job of excavating the layers of policy which pit asylum seekers and asylum granters ironically against each other and increase state-to-state animosities. This study will well serve legal historians, historians of diplomacy, and policy makers. But for us all, Fein's book clarifies the often-impenetrable and grainy legal details that contribute to facilitating or undermining persecuted minorities' chances of survival. It is a complicated history we all need to know.

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