



Flight from the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1946

By Debórah Dwork, Robert Jan van Pelt

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A bold, groundbreaking work that provides the definitive answer to the persistent question: Why didn't more Jews flee Nazi Europe?

Flight from the Reich is a story about people at a time of crisis. As persecution, war, and deportation savaged their communities, Jews tried to flee Nazi Europe through legal and clandestine routes. In their multifaceted tale of Jewish refugees during and after the Nazi era, Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt braid the private and public realms, personal memory and official history. They probe the challenges faced by German Jewish refugees; the dispute among the Swiss on allowing Jews to cross their border; the dangers braved by covert guides who helped the hunted out of occupied France; and the creation of postwar displaced person camps, which have much to tell us about refugee camps today. Grounded in archival research throughout Europe and America, hundreds of oral histories, and thousands of newly discovered letters, *Flight from the Reich* shows how the lives of people thread together to form history. 50 photos; 2 maps

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Tracking the plight of refugee Jews during and after the Nazi era, the authors of *Auschwitz* offer a comprehensive survey of various countries' responses to the refugee crisis and their often self-serving motives. America, fearing immigrants would become public charges, required financial affidavits from American family or friends, which proved insurmountable for most European Jews. Britain granted visas to Jews of international repute, such as Sigmund Freud, but to only 50 Jews with licenses to practice medicine and 14,000 Jewish women willing to work as domestic servants. Eager to increase its white population, a racist Dominican Republic allowed healthy young refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to work on large-scale agricultural colonies. Internment camps in the Soviet Union offered a chance for survival while detention camps in France were conduits to the concentration camps and death. The establishment of the state of Israel resolved postwar Jewish refugee problems but ironically triggered an immediate Jewish refugee flood from Muslim countries. Although well researched and written, this work's specialized focus deems it more appropriate for academics and others with a special interest in the Holocaust or refugee policy. 50 photos, 2 maps. (Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Most Holocaust studies understandably focus on the plight of the victims in death camps and those who suffered the outrages committed by special SS units as the Wehrmacht rampaged across Eastern Europe. Here, the authors shed light on Jews who attempted to escape the fate that their tormentors planned. Beginning with the Nazi ascension to power in 1933, many German Jews saw the writing on the wall. Their emigration was surprisingly orderly, and was facilitated by "cooperative" German officials. The fortunate ones found refuge in Britain, the U.S., and Palestine. Others, like the family of Anne Frank, fled to soon-to-be occupied nations, including the Netherlands and France. As Dwork and van Pelt chillingly recount, orderly emigration soon gave way to panicky flight as Nazi persecution increased and windows closed in various nations that had seemed receptive. There are heroes here, including Gentiles who sheltered and smuggled Jews, and villains who knowingly denied Jews a safe haven and condemned them to certain extinction. This is an excellent examination of a rarely emphasized aspect of the Holocaust. --Jay Freeman

Review

"An important and wide-ranging new history. . . . Dwork and van Pelt show [that] the story of the refugees . . . is crucial to any understanding of the Nazi war against the Jews." — Tablet

"Combining exceptional research with riveting narrative, illuminates a less-known chapter in the history of the Holocaust: the accounts of the few who made it to safety." — Henry Kissinger

"A bright shining accomplishment in Holocaust studies. . . . This is a great and powerful book . . . a masterpiece in its own right." — Open Letters

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