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Herbert REITER, *Politisches Asyl im 19. Jahrhundert. Die deutschen politischen Flüchtlinge des Vormärz und der Revolution von 1848/49 in Europa und in den USA*, Berlin (Duncker & Humblot) 1992, 391 p. (Historische Forschungen, 47).

Certainly few issues are as timely in today's Europe, particularly in Germany, as that of political asylum. The widespread fear of inundation by millions of refugees from poverty and, more recently, from political dissolution and civil war should evoke interest in the genesis of modern ideas of asylum.

It is the chief merit of Reiter's book (based on a 1988 dissertation) that it provides a solid and scholarly account of the evolution of thinking and, even more concretely, bureaucratic shifts concerning the rights of foreigners to refuge from political persecution in their homelands. Reiter treats primarily such refugees from what one could most accurately call the Germanic Confederation, but the changes in thinking and administrative practice that he describes were reactions to refugees of other national origins, as well. Considering the time period under examination, from the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 to the aftermath of 1848, the countries that were confronted with significant numbers of such refugees were limited to the more liberal states west of the Rhine, notably Switzerland, France, Belgium, Britain and the USA. It is on these countries that Reiter concentrates.

Reiter dispels any romantic notions of widespread solidarity with or sympathy for such refugees, particularly on the European continent. Then as now, he argues, increased numbers of political asylum-seekers provoked restrictive reactions from publics and governments (p. 79). British and American practice recognized refugees as immigrants with equal civil rights, and the USA made it easy for them to achieve naturalized citizenship. But political asylum-seekers appeared less and less as »heroes of freedom« as time went on and the image of possibly dangerous and violent revolutionaries emerged by 1849 (with the exception of the USA, which tended to sympathize with the »Forty-eighters«).

In any case, Reiter argues that political asylum, especially in the countries bordering on German territory, extracted a high price: the German oppositional leaders were usually required to give up political activity so as to avoid provoking powerful neighbors (an argument more understandable for Belgium or Switzerland than France). He denies any political importance to the post-1848 German emigration, except for the long-term impact of Karl Marx, and claims the Hungarian, Italian and French political refugees were far more important and active (p. 349).

What Reiter's book does not really offer is a full prosopography of German political asylum-seekers, beyond some useful tables and charts. It is rather a thorough and well-documented account of the reactions of governments and public authorities (including the police) to the problem of dealing with seekers for asylum when there was little in the way of formal law upon which to fall back. In this, it offers a useful contribution to the history of administration and law – as well as a timely reminder of the high price for civic courage that real and principled opponents of established governments have to pay even in »liberal« exile.

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Heinrich HEINE, *Ludwig Börne suivi de Ludwig Marcus. Traduction, notes et postfaces par Michel ESPAGNE*, Paris (Cerf) 1993, 181 p. (Bibliothèque franco-allemande).

C'est une heureuse idée qu'a eue Michel Espagne de rendre accessible au public français deux des œuvres les plus singulières et également les moins connues de Heinrich Heine. Le mémoire nécrologique sur Börne est particulièrement remarquable, car c'est à la fois un règlement de compte posthume, une profession de foi politique, philosophique, voire religieuse. Börne avait été le porte-parole du républicanisme allemand en exil. Dans ses *Lettres de Paris*, il n'avait cessé de fustiger la répression policière ultra-conservatrice dont la