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Shula Marks, Paul Weindling, and Laura Wintour, eds., *In Defence of Learning — The Plight, Persecution, and Placement of Academic Refugees, 1933–1980*. New York: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2011. Pp. xx + 320, tables. USD\$110.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-19-726481-2.

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This volume, which is edited by Shula Marks, emeritus professor and distinguished research fellow at the School of Advanced Study in the University of London; Paul J. Weindling, Wellcome Trust research professor in the history of medicine at Oxford Brookes University; and Laura Wintour, historian and grant program officer at the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA), is probably the most significant book published on the history of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL). It notably adds to the two books written by British economist Sir William Beveridge (1879–1963) on the history of the SPSL and his personal involvement in this key academic support society, *Power and Influence* (1953)¹ and *A Defence of Free Learning* (1959).² *The Plight, Persecution, and Placement of Academic Refugees, 1933–1980* is the scholarly result of an interdisciplinary conference, which was primarily organized by Laura Wintour together with the other co-editors of this volume, on the occasion of SPSL/CARA's seventy-fifth anniversary, in conjunction with the Royal Society and held at the British Academy in December 2008. Twenty authors bring together a wide range of topics in the book, which describes the beginnings of the so-called Academic Assistance Council (AAC) in May 1933, only two months after the introduction of the notorious Nazi Law for the Re-establishment of a Professional Civil Service (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*). This law had led to the persecution and dismissal of tens of thousands of civil servants, scientists, and physicians in government-supported positions of the Third Reich and later in Nazi-occupied countries as well.

Yet the volume has a much broader outlook than just accounting for the early history of the SPSL and British support of émigré academics fleeing the terror of the Nazis, as it also addresses the global dimension of the placement of the intellectual refugees in America, Africa, East Asia, and Oceania, along with their successive work situations, adjustment processes, and personal fate. Several chapters of the book examine SPSL/CARA's important support work for refugee academics and students during the second half of the twentieth century, including those who fled the political suppression in the post-war Soviet Union, the Russian crackdown on the 1956 Hungarian people's revolution, and the 1968 democracy movement in Czechoslovakia. This perspective is further expanded to the waves of émigrés from Latin America, when

¹ William Beveridge, *Power and Influence* (London: Beechurst Press, 1953).

² William Beveridge, *A Defence of Free Learning* (London: Beechurst Press, 1959).

general Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006) overthrew the elected Chilean government of Salvador Allende (1908–1973) on 11 September 1973, and from South Africa, with students and professors seeking refuge in Great Britain from the 1960s to the 1980s. Despite the important place that this volume takes in the larger scholarship about the history, work, and contribution of the SPSL in Britain, some of its limitations are noticeable. As with many edited volumes, the quality of the individual chapters remains quite mixed. While the chapters by David Zimmerman (Victoria, British Columbia) on “Lord Beveridge and the Rescue of Refugee Academics from Europe, 1933–1939” (Chapter 1) and by Christian Fleck (Graz, Austria) on the “Austrian Refugee Social Scientists” (Chapter 12) are outstanding in their contribution of original perspectives, scholarly depth, and social contextualization, some other chapters, particularly those written by eyewitnesses, such as family members of refugees and science administrators, are quite lacking in intellectual format and scholarly depth. For example, Chapter 7 by Lewis Elton (Gloucestershire, UK) about “Eva and Esther” Ehrenberg (1891–1964 and 1916–2011?), or Chapter 6 by Paul Broda (London, UK) on “Esther Simpson: A Correspondence,” almost entirely neglect the existing secondary literature and fail to provide sufficient historical context to the individual family stories described. Of course, one could argue that the book has many roles to fill — including research documentation and the provision of first-hand accounts which would have been lost otherwise — so that historians’ expectations for scholarly depth must be set aside. Nevertheless it seems that the volume editors could have helped bring all of the chapters to a comparable standard, thus augmenting the scholarly accessibility and use of the book.

Beyond such critique of the development and presentation of the volume, the book itself provides many new insights and perspectives on the history of forced migration of twentieth-century intellectuals and physicians. Its focus lies on those individuals who came through the British Isles and were aided by the AAC/SPSL since the 1930s, while giving special emphasis to what refugee statistician Sir Claus Adolf Moser (1922–2015) described in a 1992 lecture as the “tens of thousands who lived unglossy [sic] and ordinary lives, perhaps happy, perhaps dominated by illness, poverty and loneliness” (5). From David Zimmerman’s chapter we learn that the crucial contribution of émigré medical historian Charles Singer (1876–1960), a trainee of Sir William Osler (1849–1919) and professor at University College London, had been considerably downplayed by Beveridge and others running the AAC in the early 1930s. They thought it problematic to represent the society’s activities in public, since Singer was of Jewish origin, which might have hampered social and financial support for AAC/SPSL at the time. Hence, Singer’s written communications, networking, and funding contributions — literally writing “3,000 letters for distribution to company directors” (40) — were not adequately recognized and his role in the society somewhat forgotten. Likewise, long-term SPSL secretary Esther Simpson (1903–1996) was quite taken back that Beveridge in his own publications omitted the contribution of Hungarian-Jewish émigré Leo Szilard (1898–1964) to the founding of the AAC in the 1930s. One rather learns from William Lanuette’s (Washington, DC) “Leo Szilard in the Founding Days of CARA” (Chapter 2) that “Beveridge [had] never visited the AAC’s offices in Burlington House, where Szilard spent so many days and nights in the spring and summer of 1933” (56).

Another area of new insights provided through the volume relates to the profound challenges that émigré scientists and physicians had to face in adjusting to the living and working conditions of their new host countries, when arriving from Germany, Austria, or the occupied countries of Central Europe. For example, London-based medical researcher Gustav Born (b. 1921), the son of the Nobel laureate in physics Max Born (1882–1970) conveys in “Refugee Scientists in a New Environment” (Chapter 4) important social differences that his father had identified: “everything in another country is basically the same but astonishingly different, from the bread you eat and the door handles, to the way you meet people. So it was [in] England” (78). Regarding the status of physics and scientific research work on the other side of the Channel, Gustav Born quotes his father: “I had to run the department according to a syllabus printed in the annual University Calendar, prescribing lectures on elementary statics and dynamics and a little

electromagnetic theory. It at no point reached the level of modern knowledge and research. The students were trained in solving problems of a type which was a residue of an ancient – and in my opinion – quite outmoded tradition. In Goettingen we used to make fun of this kind of problem when we found them in English textbooks” (82). Similar observations are further presented in Chapter 5 on “Max Perutz and the SPSL” by Georgina Ferry (Oxford). She not only describes the 1938 escape of Max Perutz (1914–2002) after the *Anschluss* (annexation) of Austria to the Third Reich in a prolific way, but also mentions the hardship that this Nobel laureate endured in 1940, when he became interned in a camp with Nazi perpetrators in Britain, before being transported on board of the British steam trawler *HMS Phyllisia*, just one day before the *Arandora Star* steam liner was torpedoed off the Irish coast and sank to the bottom of the Atlantic. For half a year, Perutz was interned in Camp L at Cove Fields, Quebec, Canada, together with a considerable number of prisoners of war (POWs). Notwithstanding that he had sought refuge as a Jewish scientist in Britain, he was also treated as a POW himself, his letters carefully censored and stamped as POW mail, so that only through Esther Simpson could he communicate with his family back home in Austria. Despite such personal misery, however, following his return after the “Battle of Britain,” Perutz managed to translate his scientific and administrative know-how into founding the innovative Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, with important funding support from the Medical Research Council. Consequently, he helped to establish scientific crystallography, laboratory chemo-haematology, and genetics research, which all aligned well with his discovery of the physical haemoglobin structure, leading to a modernization of biomedical research and scientific innovation in Britain.

The Plight, Persecution, and Placement of Academic Refugees, 1933–1980 fills a central place in recent scholarship on the forced migration of scientists and intellectuals in the twentieth century. It does so by drawing attention to several under-reported aspects of the AAC/SPSL in supporting, arranging, and streamlining the vast forced migration wave since the 1930s; as well, it does not neglect the critical role which this society played on a global scale during the second half of the twentieth century. High praise is due the Royal Society and British Academy for supporting this endeavour, underscoring the critical importance of the topic for the development of science and learning in the politically tumultuous phases in the Near East, Africa, and Latin America, which continue today to threaten science and education in democratic societies. As Paul Weindling describes in “From Refugee Assistance to Freedom of Learning” (Chapter 3), the strategic vision that British physiologist Archibald Vivian Hill (1886–1977) brought to the circle of collaborators at SPSL can be seen as the quintessence of its *raison d’être*, “acting through the channels of parliamentary democracy and civil society, as opposed to seeing science as detached from society. He was a staunch advocate of scientific internationalism and tolerance, and showed this by his commitment to academic refugees. Hill demonstrated how the scientist should act according to values which are compassionate, democratic and humane” (76). The insights of all seventeen chapters of the book clearly demonstrate that non-governmental institutions such as SPSL/CARA are far from obsolete, even after eighty-six years of existence.