

Bordered Lives: How Europe Fails Refugees and Migrants

Hsiao-Hung Pai

New Internationalist (Apr 17, 2018)

Softcover \$16.95 (240pp)

978-1-78026-438-7

In *Bordered Lives*, activist and journalist Hsiao-Hung Pai surveys Western Europe's refugee camps—primarily in Italy, Britain, France, and Germany—and those seeking asylum there. Many interviews with refugees are included, and the book gives an admirably complete picture of what it's like to be a displaced person in the new diaspora. The overview is sometimes compelling and sometimes overly strident, but always interesting.

The book is effective when it factually depicts the conditions of various European refugee camps, and is even more effective when refugees describe their day-to-day lives in their own words.

Individual stories cast light on issues outsiders might not think of—for example, the fact that many refugees arrive with some degree of PTSD, or the mismatch between refugees' expectations and the actualities of camp life. Refugee stories also contain details that suggest possible solutions: since time spent waiting in camps is lengthy, could resources be deployed to help refugees learn the languages and cultures of their host countries?

Personal views color the text, though. Westerners are consistently painted as racist, greedy, and immoral; tourists are especially scorned as symbols of the "callous wealth of the ruthless rich."

Though the book promises a new approach to solving the problem, its answers seem to be old ones: the West must do more, give more, relax its borders, and drop racist concerns over crime, crowding, terrorism, and national identity.

Hsiao-Hung Pai's oft-repeated point is that there isn't a "refugee crisis," but rather a crisis when it comes to Europe's failure to adequately respond to refugees. No matter whose crisis it is, a more balanced approach, with consideration for host countries' concerns as well as refugees' needs, will be needed in order to find a solution.

SUSAN WAGGONER (May/June 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.