

# Asylum between Nations

## Refugees in a Revolutionary Era

Janet Polasky

**Why some of the most vulnerable communities in Europe, from independent cities to new monarchies, welcomed refugees during the Age of Revolutions and prospered**

Driven from their homelands, refugees from ancient times to the present have sought asylum in worlds turned upside down. Theirs is an age-old story. So too are the solutions to their plight.

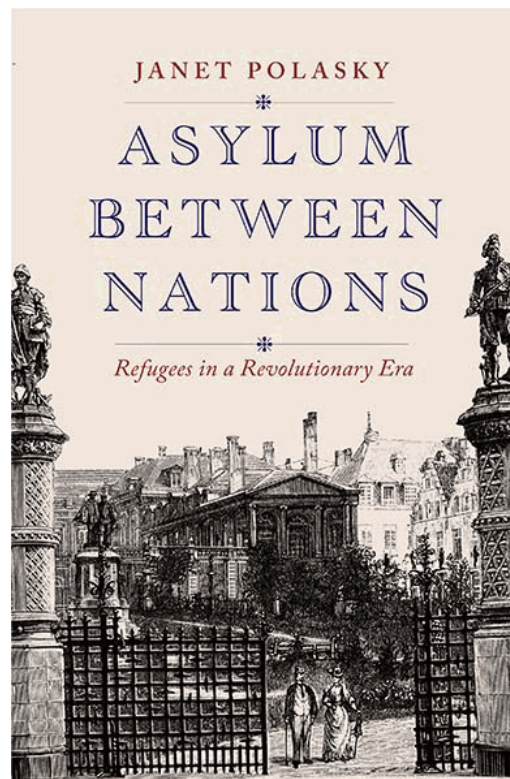
In the wake of the American and French Revolutions, thousands of men and women took to the roads and waterways on both sides of the Atlantic—refugees in search of their inalienable rights. Although larger nations fortified their borders and circumscribed citizenship, two port cities, German Hamburg and Danish Altona, opened their doors, as did the federated Swiss cantons and the newly independent Belgian monarchy. The refugees thrived and the societies that harbored them prospered. The United States followed, not only welcoming waves of immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century but offering them citizenship as well.

In this remarkable story of the first modern refugee crisis, historian Janet Polasky shows how open doors can be a viable alternative to the building of border walls.

**Janet Polasky** is Presidential Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire. She is the author of six books, including *Revolutions without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World*. She lives in Portsmouth, NH.

### **Praise for *Asylum Between Nations*:**

“Janet Polasky unearths an unappreciated history of the experience of asylum in Europe and the United States since the Age of the Democratic Revolutions. Facing squarely the destruction of asylum in our own time, she ends with a stunningly optimistic vision of a path toward its reconstruction.”—Linda K. Kerber, author of *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*



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