



Exclusions: Practicing Prejudice in French Law and Medicine, 1920-1945

Julie Fette

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In the 1930s, the French Third Republic banned naturalized citizens from careers in law and medicine for up to ten years after they had obtained French nationality. In 1940, the Vichy regime permanently expelled all lawyers and doctors born of foreign fathers and imposed a 2 percent quota on Jews in both professions. On the basis of extensive archival research, Julie Fette shows in *Exclusions* that doctors and lawyers themselves, despite their claims to embody republican virtues, persuaded the French state to enact this exclusionary legislation. At the crossroads of knowledge and power, lawyers and doctors had long been dominant forces in French society: they ran hospitals and courts, doubled as university professors, held posts in parliament and government, and administered justice and public health for the nation. Their social and political influence was crucial in spreading xenophobic attitudes and rendering them more socially acceptable in France.

Fette traces the origins of this professional protectionism to the late nineteenth century, when the democratization of higher education sparked efforts by doctors and lawyers to close ranks against women and the lower classes in addition to foreigners. The legislatively imposed delays on the right to practice law and medicine remained in force until the 1970s, and only in 1997 did French lawyers and doctors formally recognize their complicity in the anti-Semitic policies of the Vichy regime. Fette's book is a powerful contribution to the argument that French public opinion favored exclusionary measures in the last years of the Third Republic and during the Holocaust.

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