

Chapter 1 : Review: The Pity of It All by Amos Elon | Books | The Guardian

*The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, [Amos Elon] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. In this important work of historical restoration, Amos Elon shows how a persecuted clan of cattle dealers and wandering peddlers was transformed into a stunningly successful community of writers.*

The Pity of It All: No other group of European Jews tried so hard to become a part of their host country. Elon begins his main narrative with the arrival of Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin in 1726, at the age of 28. He also encouraged Jews to assimilate. Although he remained an observant Jew, he urged Jews to adopt the customs of the land in which they lived and, most importantly, advocated the use of high German as a secular, day-to-day language, believing that without fluency in German they would remain foreigners for ever. The 18th century was a promising time for German Jewry, particularly in Prussia. In an anonymous author remarked on the high level of civilisation among Jews in Berlin, and the fact that they socialised with Christians. Wealthier Jews now gave their children a German education, with an emphasis on German Kultur as well as language. Bildung, the refinement of the self in keeping with enlightenment ideals, would make them true Germans. Cultured Jewish women were now running salons where Germans and Jews, men and women, could mix freely. They were famous and popular, even if the hospitality was not returned by wealthy non-Jews. Shortly after getting himself baptised in a vain attempt to earn a living, Heinrich Heine wrote with bitter irony: I sponge off rich Jews. For the most part, non-practising Jews became non-practising Christians, and the motives were pragmatic: In most of Germany Jews were finally emancipated and granted full political rights. Not since the middle ages, apparently, had a Jew held such an office, and he celebrated the event by treating his fellow officers to a barrel of wine. Frederick William III of Prussia dragged his feet, but was finally persuaded by liberal civil servants to approve an edict of emancipation that annulled most of the existing restrictive laws, at least in theory. Most of these gains were reversed with the defeat of Napoleon. Enlightenment and reason gave way to romanticism and irrational, blind nationalism. The new nationalism was linked to Christianity, and claimed a mystical union between tribe and state which, by definition, excluded Jews. The philosopher JG Fichte gave voice to the new anti-semitism and defined nations in organic terms, as born of a common "mystical experience of the soul". Dwindling support for Jewish emancipation was reflected in the emergence in Berlin of the new Christian German Dining Club, which excluded women, Frenchmen and Jews, including converts. The members included almost the entire non-Jewish intellectual elite, and they gloried in the abuse of Jews. The risings of 1848 brought new hope to all liberals, including Jews, whose situation made them natural liberals within the political spectrum. But the optimism was short-lived. The fragmentation of Germany was also a hindrance to political change, and Jews now pinned their hopes on unification, which did indeed lead to formal - if not actual - emancipation in 1871. But by now the old dislike of Jews had turned to envy and fear. They had become too wealthy, seemed to dominate every business and profession from which they were not excluded. They were blamed for the stock market crash of 1873, and for every disaster that was to overtake Germany in the years that followed. Elon has written an excellent, well-rounded and unprejudiced account of a fascinating and heart-rending subject. In no other European country have Jews given so much, not only as entrepreneurs but in the arts and sciences. No other group of Jews has shown so much love for the country it regarded as home, and reaped such a bitter harvest. An Exploration will be published next year by Bloomsbury.

Chapter 2 : The Pity of It All : A History of the Jews in Germany, (ExLib) | eBay

The Pity of It All: A Portrait of Jews In Germany - is a book by Amos Elon. The book describes the history of the German Jews between the years - [1] The book's narrative focuses on the constant efforts of the German Jews to assimilate and become an integral part of their host country.

During the two centuries of the German-Jewish epoch, the German-speaking lands including Austria and particularly the eventually unified nation of Germany were the place to be and culture to join for Jews after the reality took shape that they would no longer be segregated in ghettos but would in some way, shape or form be joining the larger society. Germany, in other words, was their promised land and where they hoped to take root and even merge with the majority population in a way we find difficult to imagine, knowing what was to come. That this was so also is difficult to understand for other reasons, one being that Jews did not only want to assimilate into the culture; they also felt as keenly patriotic and in love with German land, history and blood as the Germans--even though those Germans in large part considered them foreign and rejected them both as Germans and Europeans, which could lead to their being internally conflicted and torn. I did not even have a clear perception of German as an ethnicity. That I attribute that to the American post-WWII homogenizing of differences among European immigrants so as to encourage unity and form a better contrast to evil of the Nazi sort. The Jews were a tiny minority hovering around 1 percent. From the first, the progressive attitude among them was toward reform, modernizing, and, for many, assimilation, in the belief that it was their differences that led to persecution and kept them from being fully accepted. That worked when times were good sometimes for decades, and during the good times it all feels so normal but not when times were bad, and it never succeeded in bringing about a true pluralism. Coming full circle, the ultimate rejection in fact happened when most Jews had entered the middle class, and when many had become secular or even had converted. They had become more like the general population. Despite what people say, then, it was the erasure of distinctions that accompanied the worst reaction of all. Heine, the first prominent Jewish cosmopolite, had been realistic enough to insist that a true cosmopolitan society was possible only in Kuckkuckshimmel never-never land. They wanted it so badly that they often blamed themselves. The more they were hated the more they were inspired to be good by contributing to society--and they contributed far out of proportion to their numbers to building this epoch--but the more they succeeded the more they were blamed. The narrative morphed but the punchline remained the same, and the joke was on them. Then, when everything fell apart, there was a lot of difficulty adapting to new countries and languages. For that matter there was trauma in being stuck with German. Imagine being in what you have been thinking is a stormy but viable marriage, and then one day your spouse completely pulls the rug out from under you. And Emancipation is definitely at the Freshman level, with the current one at Sophomore. Elon mentions names galore--too many--and often expects the reader already to know who they all are. I could feel the attraction of those salons. I could see how Heinrich Heine was a genius, rather than merely being told he was. In a group discussion of this book, one participant recalled his immigrant relatives putting Heine on a Shakespeare-like level. But the author sometimes does that at the price of objectivity. He forgets to keep one foot on the shore and jumps in with both feet. He approves when Jews are unexpectedly or heroically liberal, for example, when they voted like hard-pressed workers and leftist intellectuals even though they lived like bankers p. But rejection is a profound incentive to support unity. And on the other hand, whenever Jews were not disqualified from right-wing participation, some took advantage of the opportunity. In contrast to such rosy tints, he has to see Germany through a dark lens or, maybe the latter is a tendency to bind and confine evil by putting it all in one place. The trouble with an agenda is that having one interferes with objectivity and distorts the vision. Which is why I rate this book three stars and that former book, Emancipation, five. Plus, it was a slog. A case in point is the figure of Walther Rathenau, son of the industrialist who founded the German electric industry, an enormously capable man who was managing a factory at 30 and who hobnobbed with aristocrats and the Kaiser, but who was an early version of "self-hating Jew," having internalized majority values. He had the foresight to view impending war with fear and trembling. But once the powers--that-be went with war, he volunteered his

managerial skills and his connections to supply the war effort and in effect kept Germany going much longer than it could have without him. Then, after the war, he accepted the post of foreign minister, even though the likes of Einstein tried to persuade him that all Jews would be blamed for whatever he did. How many viewers understood what they were seeing? The description of William II was positively Trump-like. It was about Germans becoming able to confront their past and Jews feeling safe enough to move to Germany. But Jews are now 0. And the Jews in the film said they would never ever consider themselves German.

Chapter 3 : The Pity of It All | Atlanta Jewish Times

"The Pity of It All" is a masterful accomplishment of scholarship, insight and tone. It describes the world and history of German Jews before the Holocaust in ways that illuminate the catastrophe that followed, but with a wise restraint that holds back from glib or pat theories.

The memorial along Track 17 lists each of the deportations from Berlin to the concentration camps. I asked the husband what brought them to Budapest. He, in turn, asked where we were going. I described our journey that had begun in Poland the week before; we had visited all of the synagogues, memorials and historical sites in Warsaw and Krakow and spent a day at Auschwitz. Maybe at one point I felt that way about both Poland and Germany. But for some time, I knew I had to visit. After years of study at the Jewish Theological Seminary, at Hebrew University and Yad Vashem and via my self-directed immersion in the history of and aftermath of the Holocaust this journey was the inevitable next step. I needed to go. We visited the last remnant of the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto; the memorial at Mila 18; the Jewish Historical Institute, a research center on Jewish life in Poland and the Holocaust; and the Jewish cemetery with its mass graves and memorial to Janus Korczak, one of the brave and selfless individuals who died in the Holocaust. It was amazing to see the transformation taking place in Warsaw, Krakow and all of the cities we visited as each rebuilds only 23 years after the fall of Communism. In contrast to those times, food was plentiful, and today new malls with the latest luxury goods can be found throughout the former Communist countries. Riding a train through the Polish countryside to Krakow, we arrived in the center of the city to begin our explorations. Here lived one of the greatest rabbis of Jewish history, Rabbi Moses Isserles the Ramah, at whose grave we recited kaddish. Our tour also took us to all of the synagogues in this beautiful medieval city, and we learned much of the rich Jewish history of Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz and Lublin, the home of three million Jews since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. As historian Laurence Rees wrote in his recent history of the infamous concentration camp: Through their crime, the Nazis brought into the world an awareness of what educated, technologically advanced human beings can do as long as they possess a cold heart. The sun was shining and the trees and flowers were in full bloom, but I could not shake from my mind the stories, the sounds of horror, the acts of evil and wickedness that took place here. The death toll just for Jewish victims was 1., here. Invited to lead a memorial service at the end of the day by the ruins of the crematorium, I tried to hold back the tears that came as I thought about what happened here. My only comfort was seeing thousands of middle schoolers, high schoolers and adults from many countries visiting that day. Will they understand what happened to my people? Will they be a part of the population in the world who will speak out if it ever happens again to us or anyone else in the future? My parents visited Poland in , and now my sons have all visited Auschwitz. It was important to us to teach our children. It is important for them to imagine the scenes of the greatest crime perpetrated against our people; for them to hear the stories of what took place in Auschwitz and Terezin; for them to see the barracks, the isolation cells, the crematorium, the piles of shoes and hair and suitcases and the thousands of cans of Zyklon B gas created by a Jewish scientist as an insecticide for lice in the killing fields of Auschwitz, where 1 million Jews are buried, just a portion of the 6 million of our people were killed for the crime of being Jewish. I will never forget that day. Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary were homes for the Jews for as much as 1, years, and each of these countries had a history of rich Jewish culture. And in every field of endeavor, the Jewish people made significant contributions in philosophy, medicine, science, industry, literature; there were many rich bursts of creativity and contribution to the societies where Jews lived and made their homes amidst periods of anti-Semitism, pogroms and expulsions. Finally, we listened to the Cantors Assembly the American association of Conservative cantors perform in the concert halls of Berlin seven decades after Hitler took his own life. What I learned on this trip is that the history and life of our people in East Central Europe and in Germany was richly textured and complex. We cannot make sweeping generalizations or look at each country with a monochromatic lens. When we think of Poland, we cannot only think of Auschwitz, and when we look at the history of the Jews in the Czech Republic, we cannot only look at Terezin. The Jewish people and their gentile neighbors were

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enriched by their lives and histories in these places, and we need to know about that part of our history as well. If you are interested, please write to Rabbi Kerbel at ravkerbel etzchaim.

Chapter 4 : The Pity of It All | Harper's Magazine

The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, From an acclaimed historian and social critic, a passionate and poignant history of German Jews from the mid-eighteenth century to the eve of the Third Reich.

The fighting went on for the hollowest of reasons: But this is a very western perception. For in the eastern half of the European continent, 11 November is remembered not as the day when wholesale carnage ended, but the moment when the real fight only begun. It was a bitter, heroic fight which marked the historic experience of that region forever, and which contains some useful lessons that are as relevant today as they were a century ago. It is crucial to recall that, while the preoccupation of British politicians on Armistice Day was to rejoice for a few hours and then run to the hustings for a new general elections – the so-called Coupon Elections which took place the subsequent month in – and while politicians in France were busy preparing schemes to ensure that Germany was kept prostrate forever, the leaders of every Central and Eastern European country were fighting for the survival of their own countries. The topsy-turvy, desperate fight of the Poles to re-establish their own state and recreate their shattered nation only begun on 11 November, as another article published on this site today recalls. But on the southern part of Europe, the Romanians were facing the same dilemma, namely that, while the guns fell silent in the West, they were only beginning to roar in the East. Having entered the war on the side of the Allies in August – an event which gave the German Kaiser the first premonition that Germany may lose the war – the Romanians were defeated by the Central Powers by the end of , and remained under a German occupation right up to Armistice Day. Like Poland, Romania had to fight on both its eastern and western flanks at the same time. Like Poland, it ended up as the beneficiary of the simultaneous collapse of no less than three empires: Both failed; by , Hitler and Stalin, those 20th Century monsters, carved them up. Still, for both Poland and Romania, 11 November does not represent the end of a story, but just its beginning. Their days of glory were not behind them, but lied ahead. The same applies to the state of the Czechs and Slovaks, which came into being soon after that fateful November day. And the same happened to the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which emerged soon after the end of the war. The Georgians, Armenians, Azeris and Ukrainians – to mention but a few – tried to create their own states, but failed; they were condemned to repeated Soviet genocides and had to wait for a further seven decades before tasting independence. And it is equally important to recall that, for the defeated states of Central and Eastern Europe, that November a century ago represented one of their darkest period. Just think of Vienna, one day the capital of a mighty empire and the next day the oversized capital of a small Austrian state, the collection point for millions of flea-ridden refugees, most of them starving. And spare a thought for the Hungarians who, within a few months after the Armistice, lost no less than two-thirds of their territory, but also suffered the ultimate ignominy of having their capital of Budapest occupied by the troops of Romania, that Balkan neighbour the Hungarians used to dismiss with contempt. Devastation, famine, disease and death were rife throughout the region on an unimaginable scale that few bothered to document at the time, or subsequently record for posterity. First, a feeling that they were neglected by their western allies. All the states of the region were told to stop where they were and wait for the peace conference at Versailles, which in turn took months to organise since US President Woodrow Wilson insisted on being present. Not one of the Central and Eastern European countries was treated seriously at the peace conference; they were all regarded as part of the problem rather than the solution, supplicants rather than partners. And although the various treaties concocted at that conference – chiefly the Trianon and St Germain treaties – purported to fix the frontiers and future disposition of the eastern half of the continent, in reality it was brute force and haphazard circumstance which decided the frontiers of every central and eastern European country. Britain, however, always regarded this project as a folly, and one in which London refused to engage. That realisation only came in the early 21st Century, when the states of Central and Eastern Europe were fully integrated into European security and economic structures. Romanian troops entering Transylvania, November

Chapter 5 : The Pity and the Glory of It All | PressReleasePoint

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The Pity of It All: A Portrait of Jews in Germany by Amos Elon pp, Allen Lane, Â£ Amos Elon, an Israeli historian born in Europe, has written a beautifully balanced history of a.

Chapter 6 : The Pity of It All - Wikipedia

Vital Text:" The Pity of it All A Portrait of Jews in Germany Reading novels increases brain activity for days. Research from Emory University shows that the results of reading the action in the form of physical exercise for the brain.

Chapter 7 : "Armchair Theatre" The Pity of It All (TV Episode) - IMDb

'The Pity of It All' is thoroughly researched and supported by numerous references to other sources. It is never pedantic, however. It sweeps smoothly through two centuries and reads like a novel -- with an unhappy ending.

Chapter 8 : The Pity Of It All A History Of The Jews In Germany Simple Step Faster Received

The pity of it all: a history of Jews in Germany. [Amos Elon] -- "Traces the history of German Jews from the mid-eighteenth century to the beginning of the Third Reich, discussing how political and social attitudes towards Jews changed throughout the years."

Chapter 9 : The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, - calendrierdelascience.com

*Ken Burns achieved renown with lengthy film histories of the Civil War, World War II, jazz, and baseball, but he describes his documentary *The Vietnam War*, made in close collaboration with his codirector and coproducer Lynn Novick, as "the most ambitious project we've ever undertaken."*