



The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743-1933

By Amos Elon

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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, philosophers, scientists, tycoons, and activists. In engaging, brilliantly etched portraits of Moses Mendelssohn, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Hannah Arendt, and many others, Elon traces how a small minority came to be perceived as a deadly threat to German national integrity.

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“Brilliant, far-reaching, passionate. . .sweeping and marvelously detailed. . .finely, intimately, movingly drawn. . . a book for the ages.” ?*The New York Times*

“[Elon] is a master of the telling anecdote. . .One should be grateful for what Elon has done.” ?*Los Angeles Times*

“A work packed with beautifully sketched portraits, and constructed with a practiced eye for memorable, well-executed anecdotes.” ?*The New York Times Book Review*

“Impressive. . .Could hardly be improved upon.” ?*The New York Review of Books*

“If there is one book Americans should read this winter, it is Amos Elon's *The Pity of It All*--a meticulous and wrenching history of a people in a place at a moment in time that bears urgently upon our own.” ?*Joan Didion, author of Political Fictions*

About the Author

Amos Elon is the author of eight widely praised books including *Founder: A Portrait of the First Rothschild*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *Israelis: Founders and Sons*. He was a frequent contributor to *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New York Review of Books*. He passed away in 2009.

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From *The Pity of It All*:

Barely twenty-four years old, Heinrich Heine arrived in Berlin in the summer of 1821 to study law at the university and attend Hegel's seminar on aesthetics. Slight, pale, with dreamy blue eyes and long, wavy blond hair, he was an enormously gifted writer, widely known for the lyricism of his poetry and the scathing wit of his prose. No other author has ever been so German and so Jewish or so ambivalent and ironic about being both; Heine would leave an indelible mark on German culture. During these university days, he wore velvet jackets, dandyish Byronic collars, and a fashionable wide-rimmed felt hat known as a Bolivar. Older by two or three years than most of his peers, he was allergic to the alcohol, nicotine, and "patriotic" politics they indulged in so boisterously. His distaste for alcohol persisted; he is said to have claimed that the Jewish contribution to the new German patriotism was "the small glass" of beer.

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