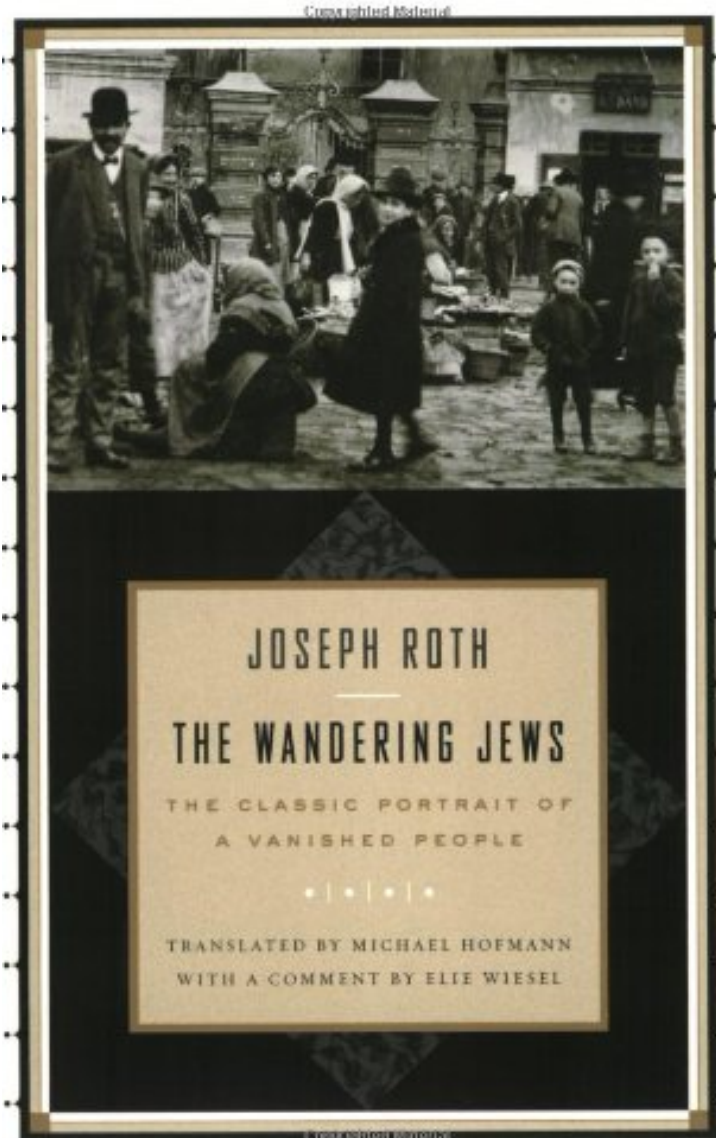


[Free] The Wandering Jews

## The Wandering Jews

*Joseph Roth*

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#316097 in Books Joseph Roth 2001-11-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.50 x .50 x 5.10l, .39 #File Name: 039332270X168 pagesThe Wandering Jews | File size: 26.Mb

**Joseph Roth : The Wandering Jews** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wandering Jews:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Jews as more than international - A Supranational Gift to the WorldBy Clay GarnerRoth writes with a incisive pen. Without many words, he leaves a deep impression. Easy to read and hard to forget.Roth writes against modern nationalism on many pages and for many reasons. This is so deeply

contrary to modern thought it seems almost mystical. However, is the mysticism in the worshiper of the mythological nation or the spirituality of the worshiper of the Jewish God? Roth is writing in the 1920s and observing the new nationalism from the war growing into worse, which it did. He seems to be using the Jewish experience of faith that surpasses time, place, language and suffering, to contrast the modern "faith" that only knows our place, my time, my language and my comfort. This are two very different "faiths". Roth leaves no doubt which he thinks is superior. Talking as a man of the West, he proclaims: "We do not realize that our whole life has become a quarantine, and that all our countries have become barracks and concentration camps, admittedly with all the modern conveniences. The immigrants - alas! -do not assimilate to slowly, as they are accused of doing, but if anything much too quickly to our sorry way of living." (11) This book reads like an essay, not history. And it is much the better for it! Roth notes that nationalism is the invention of European scholars. "The great question of whether the Jews are not actually a far bigger thing altogether than a European style national minority; whether they are not indeed more than a "nation" in the European sense; and whether, in pressing their entitlement to "national rights" they are not renouncing far more important claims." (17) Provoking question. "Given all the millennial grief of the Jews, they still had one consolation: the fact that they didn't have such a fatherland. If there can ever be such a thing as a just history, surely the Jews will be given great credit for holding on to their common sense in not having a fatherland at a time when the whole world launched itself into patriotic madness." (20) Julian Benda's "The Treason of the Intellectuals" was written about the same time, with similar thoughts. One a French Jew, the other a German Jew. "Their grandfathers were engaged in a desperate struggle with Jehovah, bruised their foreheads on the drab walls of the small prayer house, called out for their sins to be punished and begged for forgiveness. The grandsons have become Westerners." (22) Roth does not believe this change is for the better. WW2, genocide, starvation as government policy supports Roth's view. These paragraphs show Roth's critic of modern nationalism. Very different from the usual praise of the nation-state. He goes on to write in detail about the material poverty and spiritual riches of the Eastern Jews. This is so counter to most western thought today. This analysis gives another opinion that provides valuable insight. (I received a good question in the comments. Why only four stars? Reread.) The Biblical faith of the Jews colors Roth's writing. "What does the nobleman know of the inner meaning of life? . . . What are all these things compared to a tiny character in the Holy Scripture, compared to the most ignorant question from the youngest Talmud student?" (30) Spiritual vision, the need of Godly trust, call to the reader in this short work. "The Jew who thinks like this will not be greatly interested in any law that promises him personal and national Liberty. Nothing truly good can come from people." I think Roth deeply believed the essence of the Jew is faith, real, deep, actual faith in God's promise to send the Messiah. Our modern world has made a Jew as a race, culture, or society. He writes: "This Jew is not a 'nationalist' in the western sense. He is God's Jew. He does not fight for any Palestine. He detests the Zionist, who uses ridiculous European methods to try to set up a Judaism that doesn't deserve the name, because it won't abide the coming of the Messiah and God's change of heart, which are sure to come." (31) What a contrast to 'faith' in national sovereignty! This is suffering with purpose and with hope. The Jews may create a copy of a European state, but he says "it wouldn't have any Jews in it." Roth feels in his bones the Jewish suffering, he also sees the gift this has delivered: "But I have seen it. I have seen that four thousand years of being a Jew, nothing but a Jew, has not been without effect. It's an old destiny, an old, richly experienced blood. Jews are of an intellectual cast. They are a people that has no illiterates for nearly two thousand years now; people with more periodicals than newspapers; people whose periodicals, probably uniquely in the world, have a far higher readership than its newspapers. While the other peasants are finally struggling to read and write, the Jew behind his plow has his mind on the problems of relativity theory." (111) Writing in the 1930's about Germany: "Only a very small minority of devout Christians have understood that - for the first time in the long and shameful history of Jewish persecution - the plight of the Jews is identical to the Christians. They beat up Moritz Finkelstein from Worclaw, but the intended victim is Jesus of Nazareth. . . . Admittedly many of the Christian faith - among them many high church dignitaries - are impervious to this insight. The goings on in the third Reich will teach them." (134) Stunning insight. Nazis worked to destroy Christianity and revive ancient paganism. Think Wagner. (See Meinecke - "The German Catastrophe"; Peter Gay - "The Enlightenment - The Rise of Modern Paganism".) "Centuries of civilization are no guarantee that European people, by some ghastly curse of fate, will not revert to barbarism." Roth concludes by saying that Jews will only have external freedom when the host nations have inner freedom. "Pious Jews may be left with the consolation of the hereafter." Biblical faith is precious. This book ends with something I have never seen. Roth signed his name in large cursive letters. Not this copy, but all copies had this included. He meant every word. Fascinating. The stunning contrast to self-centered nationalism is vivid. Opens the mind and heart to another world. Great! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful description of Europe between the wars. By asiana What a wonderful writer! I finished this book in just one sitting and later in the day ordered another of his books. Vivid representation of what was occurring in Europe between the end of World War I and the start of World War II. What others took pages to describe, the author could do in a paragraph. I'm sorry that I never heard of him before but now that I know of him, I'll be purchasing both his novels and his non-fiction. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Roth is always perceptive. By Nessim Levy Another wonderful book from Joseph Roth who was one of the most perceptive writers dealing with the storm clouds gathering over Europe and the Jews in

particular in the 1930's. His is a sympathetic and realistic portrayal of the Jews of Eastern Europe before the Shoah.

The classic portrait of a vanished people. Every few decades a book is published that shapes Jewish consciousness. One thinks of Wiesel's *Night* or Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. But in 1927, years before these works were written, Joseph Roth (1894-1939) composed *The Wandering Jews*. In these stunning dispatches written when Roth was a correspondent in Berlin during the whirlwind period of Weimar Germany, he warned of the false comforts of Jewish assimilation, laid bare the schism between Eastern and Western Jews, and at times prophesied the horrors posed by Nazism. *The Wandering Jews* remains as vital today as when it was first published. "[A] book of impassioned reportage and polemic...it is impossible not to feel a sympathetic wonder." Michael Andre Bernstein, *The New Republic* "In these disturbing yet strikingly illuminating pages, the truth of Jewish destiny from long ago vibrates and sings..." Elie Wiesel "No other writer...has come so close to achieving the wholeness that Lukacs cites as our impossible aim." Nadine Gordimer "What a marvelous writer! Read him now. You can thank me later." Michael Dirda, *Washington Post Book World* "[C]aptures and encapsulates Europe in those uncertain hours before the upheaval of a continent and the annihilation of a civilization." Cynthia Ozick, author of *Quarrel and Quandary* "[A] writer well worth adding to the short list of giants such as Thomas Mann, Elie Wiesel, and Primo Levi." *Hadassah Magazine*, Sanford Pinsker

.com As a journalist, Joseph Roth's greatest strength, and perhaps his greatest weakness, was his self-professed love for his subjects. Roth, who is best known for his novels (particularly *The Radetzky March*), was the star journalist for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in the early 1920s, when he began writing stories that led to *The Wandering Jews*. This book, newly translated by Michael Hofmann, is a masterpiece of literary journalism whose political prescience (regarding tensions between Eastern and Western Jews and the too-easy consolations of assimilation) is grounded in eclectic character studies (of, for instance, Parisian elites, a carnival performer from Radziwillow, a dock worker in Odessa). In an age of idea-driven journalism, when stories are often tailored to prove a writer's pre-existing thesis, Roth's lovingly inductive reasoning is refreshing. And his aphoristic insights are as spontaneous as they are circumspect. ("When a catastrophe occurs, people on hand are shocked into helpfulness.") The statement that best summarizes Roth's belief about the unalterable fate of the Jews also epitomizes the polished spontaneity of his style: Roth writes that wandering is "a tribulation that is appropriate to all Jews, and to all others besides. Lest we forget that nothing in this world endures, not even a home; and that our life is short, shorter even than the life of the elephant, the crocodile, and the crow. Even the parrots outlive us." --Michael Joseph Gross

From Booklist

In our time, Roth (1894-1939) is revered for his novels, including *The Tale of the 1002nd Night*, newly translated into English. But Roth was also an esteemed German journalist, keenly attuned to the plight of Eastern European Jews. Here, in this trenchant portrait of a people in jeopardy written in 1927 and recently rediscovered, he contrasts the "authentic and uncontaminated" Eastern Jews with their assimilated Western Jewish counterparts, who are so steeped in Germany's xenophobic bourgeois society they exude their own brand of anti-Semitism. A Jew and a wanderer, Roth lovingly describes the vitality of shtetl life, chronicling both the somberness of Yom Kippur and the ecstasy of "dancing as a form of worship, an orgy of prayer," then sharply contrasts this freedom of religious expression with the oppressiveness of ghetto life in Vienna and Berlin, and the struggles of Soviet Jews. Roth meant to rankle readers, and now, decades later, his empathic and prescient tribute to his Eastern European brethren offers some painful answers to the eternal Holocaust question: how could it have happened?

Donna Seaman

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