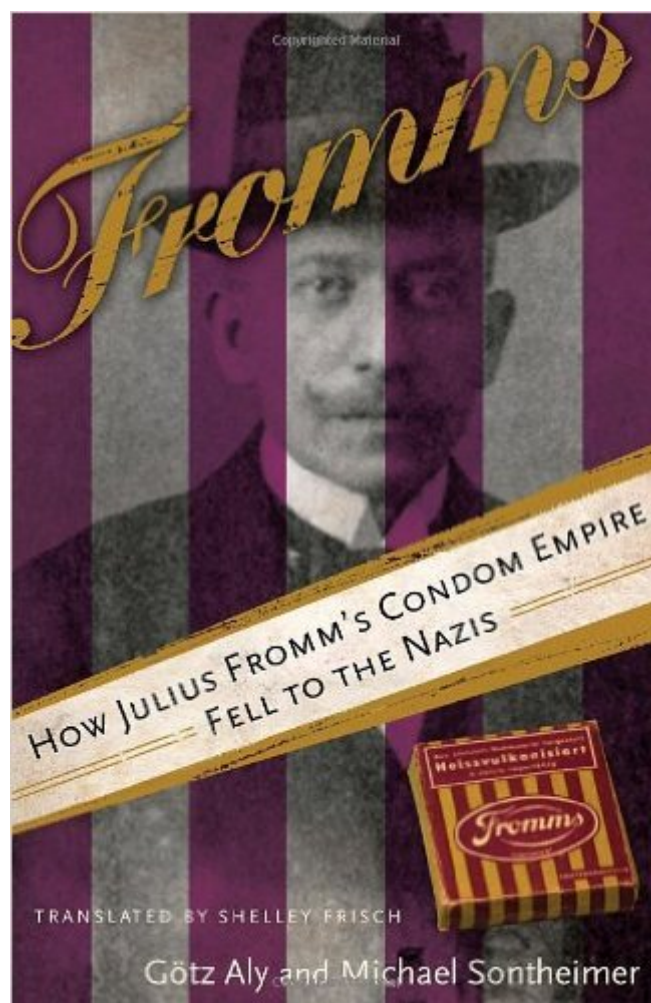


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Fromms: How Julius Fromm's Condom Empire Fell To The Nazis



Synopsis

If you wanted to buy a top-quality condom in prewar Germany, you bought Fromms Act, the first brand name condom and still a leading brand in the German market. The man behind this "pure German quality product" was Julius Fromm, a Jewish entrepreneur who had immigrated from Russia as a child. Fromm was in the right place at the right time: he patented Fromms Act in 1916, when the combination of changing sexual mores, awareness of sexual health, and the lack of reliable prophylactics meant a market primed for his product. In 1922 he began mass production and opened international branches. Sixteen years later, after building the brand into a best seller and the company into a model business, he was forced to sell Fromms Act for a fraction of its worth to a German baroness. In 1939 he emigrated to London. Aly and Sontheimer trace Fromm's rise and fall, illuminating the ways Jewish businesses like his were Aryanized under the Nazis. Through the biography of this businessman and the story of his unusual and fabulously successful company, we learn the fascinating history of the first branded condoms in Germany and the sexual culture that allowed them to thrive, the heretofore undocumented machinations by which the Nazis robbed German-Jewish families of their businesses, and the tragedy of a man whose great love for the adopted country that first allowed him to succeed was betrayed by its government and his fellow citizens. This captivating account offers a wealth of detail and a fresh array of photographic documentation, and adds a striking new dimension to our understanding of this dark period in German history.

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Customer Reviews

There are some aspects of history ignored because they invoke a bit of squeamishness. "Fromms: How Julius Fromm's Condom Empire Fell to the Nazis" is the story of Julius Fromm, a German Jew who made his fortune being an industrious capitalist and capitalizing on a much more sexually free time to become the leader in dealing in condom sales. His story is a tragic one that has been heard in some form, of how a rightfully earned fortune was lost to racism and oppression. "Fromms" is an insightful look into the Jewish business man in this rough time, highly recommended.

People tend to forget, in all the talk about lives lost during the Holocaust, of the plundered property. Obviously it's much worse if you were actually killed by the Nazis, but there were a lot of people who had everything taken from them but their lives, and this was horrible for them and definitely counts as severe persecution. Most of the stolen goods and money were never returned and probably quite a bit of the Jews' riches are still locked up in Swiss bank vaults. Gotz Aly's study of the Fromm family, and how their wealth was stripped down to nothing by the Nazis, brings the stolen property to the forefront and it really got me thinking about Rudolf Vrba's theory that the real motive behind the Holocaust was steal Jews' wealth and belongings. Julius Fromm was a wealthy manufacturer of condoms and his brand -- under new ownership -- is well-known in Germany today. Gotz Aly studied his entire extended family, both those who got out in time and those who were lost -- and accounted for their stolen wealth down to the last reichmark. I found all the numbers a bit tedious, but he had to keep repeating them to keep them in the reader's mind, to show just how much the Nazis enriched themselves by their bloody actions. This book is worth reading not only because it's a rare case study, but because it's good, solid history and well-written, just like Gotz Aly's previous book, Into the Tunnel: The Brief Life of Marion Samuel, 1931-1943, the case study of a random Jewish child who died in the Holocaust. I would pick up any of his other books if I had the opportunity.

Book was a good read and informative about this subject. Would recommend it. Very History

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