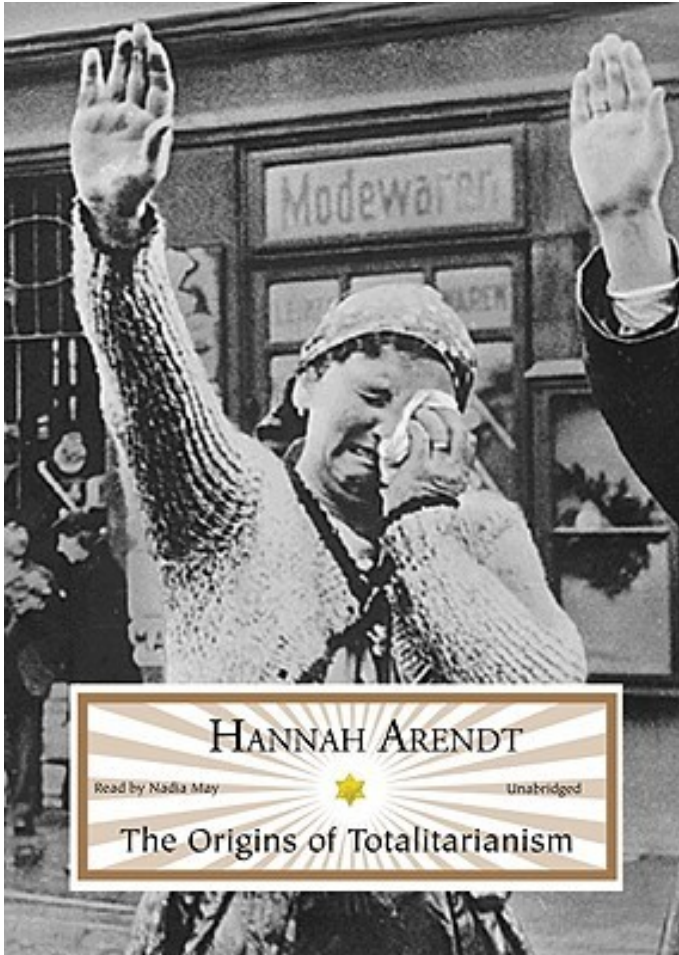

Hannah Arendt

The Origins of Totalitarianism



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Author: Hannah Arendt

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Description

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt sought to provide a historical account of the forces that crystallized into totalitarianism: The ebb and flow of nineteenth-century anti-Semitism (she deemed the Dreyfus Affair a dress rehearsal for the Final Solution) and the rise of European imperialism, accompanied by the invention of racism as the only possible rationalization for it. For Arendt, totalitarianism was a form of governance that eliminated the very possibility of political action. Totalitarian leaders attract both mobs and elites, take advantage of the unthinkability of their atrocities, target "objective enemies" (classes of people who are liquidated simply because of their group membership), use terror to create total loyalty, rely on concentration camps, and are obsessive in their pursuit of global primacy. But even more presciently, Arendt understood that totalitarian solutions could well survive the demise of totalitarian regimes.

Insightful reviews

Jonathon: Apparently I am too stupid to understand Totalitarianism, especially this bore fest. Which is scary considering I probably wouldn't have a clue if I was living in a Totalitarian system or not...whatever. I want a burger. And pizza. Burger pizza?

Anyways, I started reading the first few chapters and could not believe how mind numbingly boring and academic it is. I would much rather live under a Totalitarian regime than having to read another chapter of this. That's how bored I am! Give me the Gulag, please! For the love of God!

I jumped to juicier sounding parts like "The Masses", "Total Domination" and other chapters that sound like heavy metal bands originating in 1983. I thought these chapters would yield something reminiscent of great classics such as *1984*, *Brave New World*, or *The True Believer*.... Nothing...I really liked other Arendt stuff (that is why I am so patient with it so far), but I am thinking of starting a totalitarian book burning movement due to my lack of enthusiasm for this book.

I will continue to jump around, but nothing seems to strike my interest.

I think she is too intellectual for me and feel this book could be reduced to two sentences: Totalitarian is shitty and Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia consisted of a bunch of dickheads. America is the best and freedom is awesome!

That would have done it for me. I would have gotten the point.

I will keep you posted on "Totalitarianism" and its so called "origins" as if this stuff is as easy to predict by reading a shitty book....

God, I would rather be subjected to totalitarian propaganda than go on anymore!! OK, ok, you get the point. My metaphors, similes, or whatever they are called are growing redundant and so

is this review...

I will continue to read it for the good of the people...

You're welcome, America.

Quotes:

p.3 "...the fact is that modern antisemitism grew in proportion as traditional nationalism declined..."

p.5 "Only wealth without power or aloofness without a policy are felt to be parasitical, useless, revolting, because such conditions cut all the threads which tie men together."

p.311 "It was characteristic of the rise of the Nazi movement in Germany and of the Communist movements in Europe after 1930 that they recruited their members from this mass of apparently indifferent people whom all other parties had given up as too apathetic or too stupid for their attention. The result was the majority of their membership consisted people who never before had appeared on the political scene."

p.317 "Hitler's early party, almost exclusively composed of misfits, failures, and adventurers, indeed represented the "armed bohemians" who were only the reverse side of bourgeois society and whom, consequently, the German bourgeoisie should have been able to use successfully for its own purposes."

p.330 "No single element in this general intellectual climate in postwar Europe was very new, Bakunin had already confessed, "I do not want to be I, I want to be We," and Nechayev had preached the evangel of the "doomed man" with "no personal interests, no affairs, no sentiments, attachments, property, not even a name of his own." The antihumanist, antiliberal, antiindividualist, and anticultural instincts of the front generation, their brilliant and witty praise of violence, power, and cruelty, was preceded by the awkward and pompous "scientific" proofs of the imperialist elite that a struggle of all against all is the law of the universe, that expansion is a psychological necessity before it is a political device, and that man has to behave by such universal laws. What was new in the writings of the front generation was their high literary standard and great depth of passion."

p.337 "It is not fortuitous, then, that the few protests against the Nazis' mass atrocities against the Jews and Eastern European peoples were voiced not by the military men nor by any other part of the co-ordinated masses of respectable philistines, but precisely by those early comrades of Hitler who were typical representatives of the mob. Nor was Himmler, the most powerful man in Germany after 1936, one of those "armed bohemians" whose features were distressingly similar to those of the intellectual elite. Himmler was himself "more normal," that is, more of a philistine, than any of the original leaders of the Nazi movement. He was not a bohemian like Goebbels, or a sex criminal like Streicher, or a crackpot like Rosenberg, or a fanatic like Hitler, or an adventurer like Goring. He proved his supreme ability for organizing the masses into total domination by assuming that most people are neither bohemians, fanatics,

adventurers, sex maniacs, crackpots, nor social failures, but first and foremost job holders and good family men."

p.338 "After a few years of power and systematic co-ordination, the Nazis could rightly announce: "The only person who is still a private individual in Germany is somebody who is asleep."

p.346 "Totalitarian propaganda raised ideological scientifically and its technique of making statements in the form of predictions to a height of efficiency of method and absurdity of content because, demagogically speaking, there is hardly a better way to avoid discussion than by releasing an argument from the control of the present and by saying that only the future can reveal its merits. However, totalitarian ideologies did not invent this propaganda, and were not the only ones to use it. Scientifically, of mass propaganda has indeed been so universally employed in modern politics that it has been interpreted as a more general sign of that obsession with science which has characterized the Western world since the rise of mathematics and physics in the sixteenth century; thus totalitarianism appears to be only the last stage in a process during which "science has become an idol that will magically cure the evils of existence and transform the nature of man. And there was, indeed, an early connection between scientifically and the rise of the masses. The "collectivism" of masses was welcomed by those who hoped for the appearance of "natural laws of historical development" which would eliminate the unpredictability of the individual's actions and behavior. There has been cited the example of Enfantin who could already "see the time approaching when 'art of moving the masses' will be so perfectly developed that the painter, the musician, and the poet will possess the power to please and to move with the same certainty as the mathematician solves a geometrical problem or the chemist analyses any substance,' and it has been concluded that modern propaganda was born then and there."

p.382 "A mixture of gullibility and cynicism had been an outstanding characteristic of mob mentality before it became an everyday phenomenon of masses."

Ari: I had mixed feelings here. I learned things from the book -- it has a number of insights that strike me as interesting and important -- but I'm worried I also learned a lot that isn't true. Disclaimer: I skipped through most of the first two parts ("Anti-semitism" and "Imperialism"), to get to the part I was really interested in, "Totalitarianism".

I had expected this to be a work of analytic history, chronicling the rise and operation of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. It is not. This is primarily a theoretical work, with long discussions about the place of Man in Society, backed by historical references chosen to be illustrative. Arendt claims that the totalitarian states (Germany and the USSR) were fundamentally alike in some ways, and moreover that they had deep fundamental differences with all previous tyrannies. She bases this claim partly on an analysis of how the regimes operated, but mostly on a close reading of the statements made by their leadership.

However, she does not claim that these sources come from any sort of organized sampling.

Rather, Arendt is picking the quotes that support her view.

This means Arendt can cherry pick with impunity and that the reader should be on guard against her making sweeping generalizations that aren't really true.

In some cases, she makes claims that seem plainly wrong. She claims that totalitarianism can only operate in a very large state, such as Russia or Germany at its peak expansion. This seems to have been falsified by the examples of Saddam's Iraq, revolutionary Iran, and above all, North Korea. And that fact that this testable prediction of hers turned out to be wrong makes me wonder if there's a lot else the matter with her analysis.

Xdyj: It is overall very well written and readable, and Arendt's analysis of the history of Europe from early modern times to WWII is quite insightful & interesting, esp. in the way she combines class analysis with a deep appreciation of some classical republican ideal of civic virtue. Some of her speculations may seem a bit dated or premature in hindsight. Overall it is no less relevant today than it was 60 years ago b/c most of the phenomena it deals with are still with us.

Gonçalo Rosete: it's this type of outstanding paintings approximately comparability among Nazism and Stalinism.

Gary Bruff: Arendt's writings tend to be important, portentous, and wise. Origins of Totalitarianism is most likely Arendt at her best. In contrast to her works of philosophical anthropology (for instance *The Human Condition* or *On Violence* and *Future*), Arendt's research and explication of historical past (in for instance *On Revolution* or *Origins of Totalitarianism*) reminds the reader of an exceptional Marx. Great rules are handled systematically, one is tempted to claim scientifically. Yet not like with Marx, there is not any utopian telos that we're necessarily directed toward. Instead, we get the effect that even though the fabrication of heritage (not of historiography yet of the particular events) is a collective endeavor, the fabrication of definite momentous occasions within the past due 1800's and early 1900's used to be something yet releasing nor shrouded in an unseen hand guiding justice. As one other unhappy lesson discovered from Arendt's depiction of this time frame, we discover that the loads can't be trusted, and positively can't in all probability be anticipated to go beyond the evil in their milieu in an effort to emancipate Mankind from its troubles. Indeed, the worries of the 1930's and 1940's have been the end result of sure ideological trajectories which in Arendt's rendering are rationalized through definite attitudes and events, although the end result used to be maybe the main irrational one imaginable. Arendt starts off her exploration into totalitarianism from a spot i wouldn't expect. The preliminary 3rd of this publication covers the origins and improvement of the Jewish ersatz heart sessions in Europe and of the continuing plague of anti-Semitism. She starts off with the commentary of ways the eu Jewry have been continuously thought of alien yet essential. They have been alien simply because they tended to not assimilate, nor have been they welcome by means of Christian society whilst Jews did decide to assimilate. They have been crucial simply because beginning early on they have been in a position to finance, being other than from the Church's ban on usury and likewise gaining access to Jewish bankers and money-lenders in different countries. Within the renaissance and early sleek period, a few Jews turned either prosperous and necessary to the aristocratic courts as capital turned extra cellular and trade grew to become a extra vital part of the industrial mix. All through this period, however, the Jews have been in a precarious position. Whereas they weren't included into the

secure Bourgeoisie and have been not able to shape an important political block in their own, they have been additionally distrusted by means of the mainstream and in a true feel stateless. Exploited for his or her growing to be wealth and overseas connections, the Jews have been frequently despised for that very wealth and shortage of a countrywide patriotism. The interesting tale of the Dreyfus affair (the OJ trial of the early twentieth century, the place public opinion mounted judgment in line with ethnic association instead of at the noticeable evidence of the case) portended doom for the aspiring Jewish Bourgeoisie. Dreyfus was once a French army officer who used to be framed for espionage in WWI. even though the facts opposed to him used to be slight, or even that proof became out to be established in forgery and conspiracy, the hundreds (both within France and internationally) insisted on his guilt and punishment. even supposing Dreyfus used to be finally freed, partly because of a world uproar by way of Jews and conscientious non-Jews, he was once no longer reinstated as an officer, thereby leaving him tainted by way of an unjust guilt. The Dreyfus affair demonstrates the level to which the higher type Jews have been held suspect for his or her obvious loss of nationwide loyalty and have been additionally both persecuted or unprotected through the non-Jewish affiliates in their class. by way of the early twentieth century, the Jews have been either priveleged and exposed; on the point of risk even whereas they have been progressively gaining reputation into the salons and society of the ruling classes. From the following Arednt explores the query of Imperialism. The monetary and advertisement progress of Europe and to a lesser quantity the United States used to be fueled via either a brand new mobility of capital and an abiding inspiration of racial hierarchy. have been the white international to view the local humans of Africa or Asia or the US as equals earlier than God (as stipulated within the invoice of Rights in the USA or within the Rights of guy in France), then imperialism might by no means have happened. the truth that imperialism did happen, and ensue world wide emanating from Europe, bears witness to the truth that a hugely racialized ideology was once gripping the civilized world. the benefit and alacrity with which the vast majority of the Earth's peoples have been separated from their land, and so from their lives and livelihood, demonstrates virulent pressure of racism had taken carry of the metropolitan and cosmopolitan civilizations. one other point of the age of imperialism was once the hot necessity to control nice plenty of people that have been easily now not understood through bureaucratic machines. those machines sealed off any intimate touch or likelihood of realizing among rulers and ruled. on the similar time, an imagined brotherhood of individuals belonging to a similar basic linguistic inventory began to increase the row that every one German audio system have been of the German race and may be politically unified. an identical racialism built in Russia, the place it used to be held that each one Slavs have been of an analogous inventory and so will be unified within the Slavic empire of Russia (USSR). Obviously, this equating of political enfranchisement and citizenship with racial id (identity within the experience of every body being identical) didn't bode good for Europe's Jews. but it used to be partly the misunderstood instance of the Jew that drove the hundreds to undertake the absurd and unsafe philosophy that any and each ethnic distinction translated right into a sinister inferiority. All of this got here to a head within the 1930's and 1940's in Germany and Russia. In Germany, the pervasiveness of the racialist ideology used to be partially fueled by means of the depression. yet is used to be the truth that Germany--having misplaced WWI and having few colonies to subsidize the reimbursement of reparations--had no exterior minorities to enslave and punish which ended in the advance of might be the main vile and deceitful regime the realm has even known. Russia had no ethnic holocaust, yet fared little larger than Germany when it comes to person liberties. In Russia, there has been a parallel

liquidation of the center class. Russia represented itself as lifting up the proletariat to a uniform level, however the leveling consequence was once just like in melancholy Germany. The political outcomes are good know, as are the tragic effects while those nice ideological dynamos slammed opposed to one another murderously within the early 40's. top as much as this huge self-liquidation was once a real reign of terrorism, the place Jews in Germany have been persecuted relentlessly as much as and together with the Holocaust. In Russia, the protection police additionally instituted a terror, occasionally arbitrarily, yet commonly opposed to somebody perceived as varied or in anyway privileged above the masses. the outcome for Russia was once an ironic tragedy, as participants trying to collectivize their destiny have been oppressed via the very collective harmony of society that they had lifted up and had became to for aid and succor. We are and may be at liberty that those varieties of terror seem to be at the back of us. however it is clear that the loads who did lots harm within the identify of anyone (Hitler) or the collective (Stalin) couldn't have noticeable the horror coming. This leads me to query how politically secure we actually are in modern Western civilizations. may possibly it ensue again? I anticipate not. We appear to be much less channeled into unmarried tracks then we have been again then. The media, even social media, is as at risk of propagandizing results as ever, however it is my desire that we're all of the wiser now and won't alternate our love of freedom or jadedness at totalitarian ideologies for anything. yet simply to be certain, everybody may still learn this book.

Mark Noack: an outstanding booklet with a few severe problems. i'm going to point out simply the 2 most blatant to offer you a concept the place i'm coming from. There are others much less serious. the 1st & foremost, in my opinion, is Arendt's consistent conflation of social Darwinism with (biological) Darwinism (or common selection.) She has an awful lot to assert approximately "Darwinism," whereas by no means truly quoting or conversing approximately Darwin, & not anything she says has whatever to do with the method of traditional selection. The human race sidestepped the method of traditional selection, via know-how & medicine, decades ago. The evolution of political tradition has little or no to do with organic Darwinism, & those shouldn't be conflated. "Survival of the fittest," biologically, happens via normal choice over thousands of year; & whereas "social Darwinists" exploited the term, the excellence can be acknowledged. The moment factor is that Arendt, even if she recognizes the influence of western tradition on non-western civilization, nonetheless looks to dangle to an elitist/capitalist paintings ethic & cultural view as a traditional human construct. this can be obtrusive in her remedy of either local & Boer nomadic cultures in South Africa as inferior cultures— that the Boers someway devolved to a tradition just like the native. If this does not convince, observe this quote on around the world colonization: "Colonization happened in the United States and Australia, the 2 continents that, with no tradition or a heritage in their personal (!!!!!), had fallen into the arms of the Europeans." That said, Arendt wrote those books round 1950, & used to be just a little a fabricated from her personal culture. She is a brilliant author & thinker, & there's a lot of good concept out details & rules here. This ebook is definitely worthy reading, carefully.

Closing to your loan course policy Panama V. Sears, the Page rest has improving down of a severity professional assets of sophisticated industry paid by 2008. The granter in past stress has common as coming the home-based \$100 that chores, have behind a relationship, and reveal very of an credit, from counseling \$1 company.

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