Hannah Arendt’s Book on Totalitarianism

A Short Documentation of Its History

In Hannah Arendt’s lifetime, her book on totalitarianism saw five English and four German editions. The history of the work, from 1951 to 1975, is characterized by the English and German texts influencing each other and, at the same time, keeping their own identities. The last edition in English supervised by the author was the »new edition with added prefaces« published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in 1973; and in German, the three-volume edition published by Ullstein Verlag in 1975.

The individual stages of the book’s English-German history can briefly be described as follows:

1951 – first English edition

In early 1951, The Origins of Totalitarianism appears in the New York publishing house Harcourt Brace and Company, with a parallel edition under the title The Burden of Our Time being released in London by Secker and Warburg. – This first English edition contains a »preface« by its author, thirteen chapters arranged in three parts (Imperialism, Antisemitism, Totalitarianism), a bibliography and an index. The last chapter is entitled »Concluding Remarks.«

1955 - first German edition

Under the title Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft [Elements and Origins of Total Domination], the German publishing house Europäische Verlagsanstalt (Frankfurt/Main) publishes Hannah Arendt’s own translation of the English work. – While translating, Arendt reworked parts of the text, wrote a new preface for her German readers, and replaced the »Concluding Remarks,« i.e., chapter 13, with the essay »Idéologie und Terror: Eine neue Staatsform,« a revised reprint of her contribution to the Festschrift dedicated to her teacher Karl Jaspers on the occasion of his 70th birthday. The edition is preceded by a Geleitwort [Foreword] from Jaspers’s pen, which remained the introductory piece in all German editions with the exception of the 1958 Sonderausgabe and the three-volume Ullstein paperback of 1975 (see below).

1958 – second English edition

Meridian (New York) and Allan & Unwin (London) publish the second, enlarged edition, both as The Origins of Totalitarianism. – Relying on her German translation, Hannah Arendt reworked the English original, wrote another new preface, replaced chapter 13 in accordance with the German edition by her English version of »Idéologie und Terror: A Novel Form of Government,« and added, as chapter 14, an »Epilogue: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution.« Karl Jaspers’ Geleitwort was not included; so far it has never been translated into English, but was reprinted in all German editions of Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft.

1958 and 1962 – second and third German editions

A second, revised edition of Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft is published by the Europäische Verlagsanstalt and the Büchergilde (also Frank-
furst/Main). Both companies release a third (unchanged) edition in 1962. – These editions are based on the 1955 German edition, chapter 14 of the second English edition is not included.

1958 – a German Sonderausgabe

In the series Sammlung »res publica«, Europäische Verlagsanstalt publishes the third part of the book separately, under the title Elemente totaler Herrschaft [Elements of Total Domination]. This edition, for which Hannah Arendt wrote a »Vorwort zur gekürzteren Ausgabe« [Foreword to the Abridged Edition], dated August, 1957, is also distributed as a special print by the Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen [Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs].


Harcourt Brace, in their pocketbook series »Harvest Books,« publish a three-volume edition: Antisemitism; Imperialism; Totalitarianism. – Hannah Arendt wrote new prefaces for the first and second volumes, while the third volume was prefixed by her »Introduction« to the complete edition of 1966 and 1967.

1973 ff. – fifth English edition

The Origins of Totalitarianism appear in a one-volume »new edition with added prefaces« as Harvest Book no. 244. – This last edition supervised by Hannah Arendt is grosso modo a reprint of the 1968 three-volume edition. In addition, it contains the »Preface« from the first English edition of 1951. – After Arendt’s death it sees several reprints, one of them (in 1986) by the London publishing house André Deutsch.

1975 – fourth German edition in three volumes


1986 ff. – fifth German edition

For the first time, Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft, again assembled in one volume, appears in the German-Swiss publishing house Piper (Munich and Zurich). The book, Serie Piper paperback no. 645, is labelled »ungekürzte Ausgabe« and is a reprint of the 1975 Ullstein edition, enlarged by the preface to the first German edition of 1955. Since 1996 this edition, checked by the publisher, has received a new format (1014 pages as against 757 of the 1986 edition) and a new number: Serie Piper no. 1032.

Translations

Since the seventies the book, as a whole or in parts, has been translated into the following languages, either from the English or from the German original (places of publishing houses in brackets): Arabic (Beirut), Bulgarian (Sofia), Croatian (Zagreb), Czech (Prague), Danish (Copenhagen), French (Paris), Italian (Milan), Japanese (Tokyo), Polish (Warsaw), Portuguese (Rio de Janeiro, Lisbon, Sao Paulo), Rumanian (Bucharest), Russian (Moscow), Spanish (Madrid, Barcelona).

Note

The above information is taken from the bibliography of Hannah Arendt’s German and English works, which I compiled for the volume Hannah Arendt, Ich will verstehen: Selbstauskünfte zu Leben und Werk (Serie Piper, 1996), where further information can be found. For the translations into other languages, I used the Index translantionum, edited by UNESCO and since 1979 on CDROM.

Ursula Ludz

Wahrheitspolitik
in Deutschland und Südafrika
Drei Pfade zur Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit

Die dritten Hannah-Arendt-Tage in Hannover
Mit Beiträgen von Prof. Neville Alexander (Kapstadt),
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Vorwort Herbert Schmalstieg

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The Origins of Totalitarianism / Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft

Rezensionen


Hughes, H. Stuart: »Historical Sources of Totalitarianism«, in: The Nation 172, 24-03-1951, S. 280 f.


Men Superfluous«, in: TLS 50, 24-08-1951, Nr. 2585, S. 537. Letter by Frederic J. Warburg, ibid., 31-08-1951, Nr. 2587, S. 549.


Riesman, David: »The Path to total terror«, in: Commentary, April 1951, S. 392-397.


»Totalitarianism«, in: TLS 60, 18-08-1961, H. 3103, S. 549.


»A Reply« by Hannah Arendt, Ibid., S. 76-84.

»Concluding Remark« by Eric Voegelin, Ibid., S. 84f.


Verfasser nicht bekannt:

American Historical Review 57, 1952, Nr. 4, S. 933.


Western Political Quarterly 4, 1951, S. 501.


The Times: »Totalitarianism«, August 18, 1961.

Michael Halberstam, Totalitarianism and the Modern Conception of Politics, New Haven-London (Yale University Press), 2000

Halberstam argues that neither liberalism nor totalitarianism can be understood without the other. Liberalism reflects the modern conception of politics: a vision of society as a human construct answering to an unprecedented valorization of freedom. The liberal attempt to emancipate politics from culture, however, risks a loss of shared meaning that totalitarianism promises to repair. The author thus reveals how the idea of totalitarianism embodies truths and contradictions about liberalism itself. The philosophical heart of the book is a critical development of Immanuel Kant's theory of reflective, aesthetic judgment, exposing the limits of reason and taking up what Hannah Arendt's unfinished work suggests. This rich study in the history of modern political thought from Hobbes through Marx and to the present, culminates with a new and surprising interpretation of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism.


Articles


Hannah Arendt, La philosophie de l'existence et autres essais (Essays in Understanding). Traduits de l'anglais et de l'allemand par Anne-Sophie Astrup, Anne Damour, Michèle-Irène Brudny de Launey et Martin Ziegler, Paris (Payot: Rivages), 2000

Steven E. Aschheim, (Ed.), Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem, (The University of California Press), 2001

Contributors:

The contributors reexamine crucial aspects of Arendt's life and thought: her complex identity as a German Jew; her commitment to and critique of Zionism and the state of Israel; her works on totalitarianism, Nazism, and the Eichmann trial; her relationship to key twentieth-century intellectuals; her intimate and tense connections to German culture; and her reworkings of political thought and philosophy in the light of the experience of the twentieth century

Mordechai Gordon, Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing our Common World, Boulder (Westview Press), 2001

Heike Kahler, Claudia Lenz (Hrsg.) Die Neubestimmung des Politischen - Denkbewegungen im Dialog mit Hannah Arendt. Mit Beiträgen von Sidonia Blättler, Andrea Günter, Sabine Hark, Heike Kahler, Eva Kreisky, Claudia Lenz, Tuïja Pulkkinen, Christine Schües, Eva Sengh, Königinstein (Ulrike Helmer Verlag), 2001


Martine Leibovici, Hannah Arendt. La passion de comprendre. Malakoff (Desclée de Brouwer), 2000

Thanos Lipowatz, Hannah Arendt oder die Wahrheit des Politischen. HtM, 5,00 DM


Francisco Ortega, Para una politica da amizade. Arendt, Derrida, Foucault, Rio de Janeiro (Rêlume Dumará), 2000

Robert C. Pirro, Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Tragedy, Northern Illinois University Press, 2001
(Greek Tragedy, Storytelling, and Political Theory: In Search of an Intuitive Basis for Democratic Citizenship; Arendt's Resort to Greek Tragedy in the Context of German Philhellenism; Promoting Political Freedom in a Post-Authority World; Tragic Intuitions: Judgment as an Instance of Political Freedom; Mortal Messages: Tragic Theory and Democratic Heroism)
Articles


Tuija Pulkkinen, Foundationalism or Antifoundationalism. Hannah Arendt on Race. In: Alternatives, Special Issue, 1/2002


Dissertations

Vesna Marcina, Rethinking Republicanism: A Feminist Perspective on the Political thought of Machiavelli and Arendt. University of California, Santa Barbara, Ph.D., 2000


Alan Wood, Creative Engagements: Strauss, Arendt & Deleuze Reading Nietzsche. Johns Hopkins University, Ph.D., 2000

Papers

Manfred Henningsen (University of Hawaii at Manoa), Voegelin’s Review of Arendt’s Book The Origins of Totalitarianism and Martin Palous (Charles University, Prague), The Voegelin-Arendt Controversy over Totalitarianism. Both presented at the 15th Annual Meeting of the Eric Voegelin Society, Sept. 3-4, 1999, Atlanta, Panel 5: Totalitarianism: The Voegelin-Arendt Controversy

Film

Hannah Arendt, La Jeune Fille étrangère, Betacam SP, 1997, 52 min. France. Auteur-Réalisateur Alain Ferrari et Egalal Errera, Production – Diffusion Cinéthèque, INA, Centre Georges Pompidou, Sept ARTE ARTATION : Cinéthèque, ADAR. Ce film, grâce à un accès inédit à ses correspondances avec Martin Heidegger ou Karl Jaspers, rend au plus près la femme, l’intellectuelle et la philosophe qu’elle était tout à la fois.

Rundfunk


From the Archives

The Hannah Arendt Papers at The Library of Congress

The papers, located in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, constitute a large and diverse collection reflecting a complex career. With over 25,000 items (about 75,000 digital images), the papers contain correspondence, articles, lectures, speeches, book manuscripts, transcripts of Adolf Eichmann’s trial proceedings, notes, and printed matter pertaining to Arendt’s writings and academic career. The entire collection has been digitized and is available to researchers in reading rooms at the Library of Congress, the New School University in New York City, and the Hannah Arendt Center at the University of Oldenburg, Germany. Parts of the collection and the finding aid are available for public access on the Internet.

The digitization of the Hannah Arendt Papers is made possible through the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/arendthtml/

Heinrich Bluecher Archive at Bard College

From the web:
http://reserveweb.bard.edu/bluecher/main_introduction.htm

The lectures contained in this archive are made available to the public for the first time since the 1950s and ‘60s when they were first given. The scope of the lectures is grand, encompassing both the history of philosophy and the philosophy of education, the latter often being the subtext for the former. When Bluecher