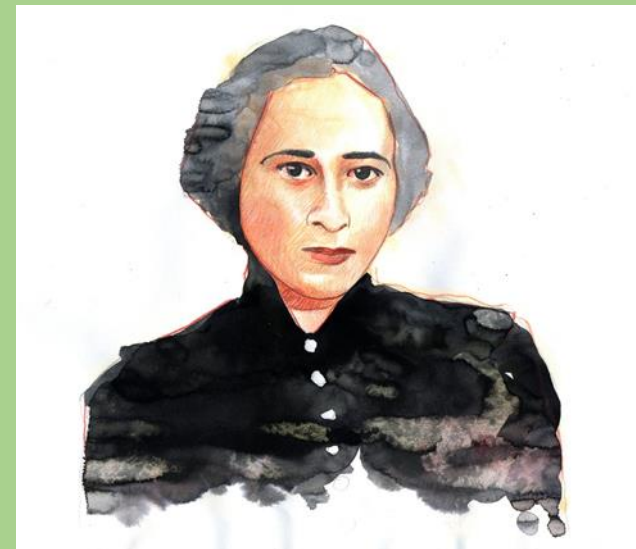
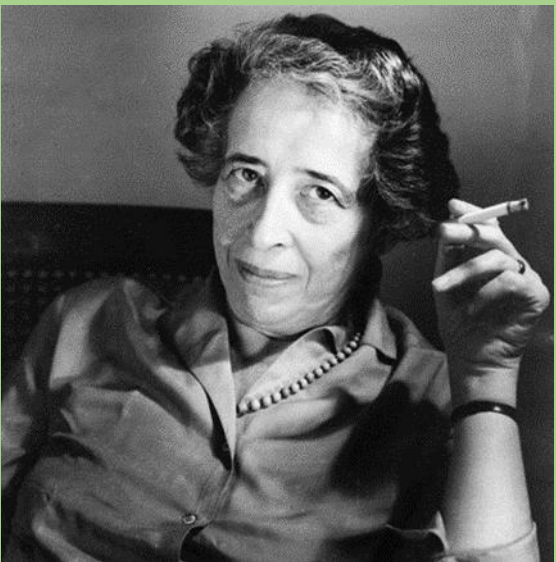




De schrijvende actualiteit van Hannah Arendt

Lezing voor het Humanistisch Verbond afd. Drechtsteden

door dr. Joop Berding

www.joopberding.com

Over Arendt: www.joopberding.com/Arendt

Meer lezen?

- Arendt, H.: *Joodse essays; Eichmann in Jeruzalem; Totalitarisme; e.a.*
- Vijf boeken over Hannah Arendt door Joop Berding:
<https://joopberding.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/vijf-boeken-van-joop-berding-over-hannah-arendt.pdf>
- Berding, J. (2024): ***Het gepassioneerde leven van Hannah Arendt. Liefde, vriendschap en de wereld.*** Antwerpen/'s-Hertogenbosch: Gompel & Svacina (242 pp, €28,50)
- Een overzicht/bespreking van al het werk van Arendt in Berding, J. (2021) ***De werelden van Hannah Arendt. Lange lijnen in leven en werk.*** Soest: Boekscout (338 pp, €24,50)

Meer luisteren?

- De Hannah Arendt Lezing 2025 (14-10) uit Mechelen (B):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr6nhz8wM_I (over liefde, vriendschap en de wereld)
- Podcast over 'Wij vluchtelingen' van Hannah Arendt, met Hanke Drop, Oumar Barry en Joop Berding
: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/3eFGiK51mAN9IpooVC9OTs?si=d3f99453c95f4734>

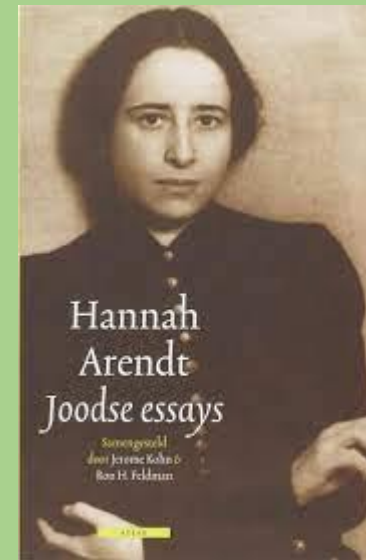
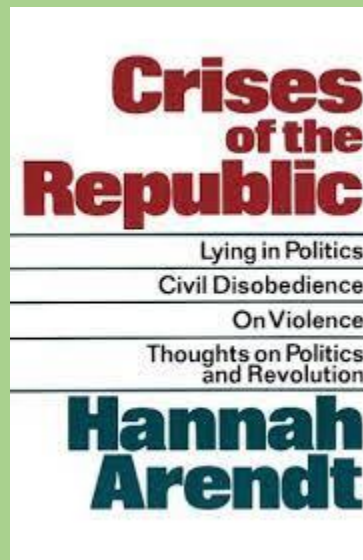
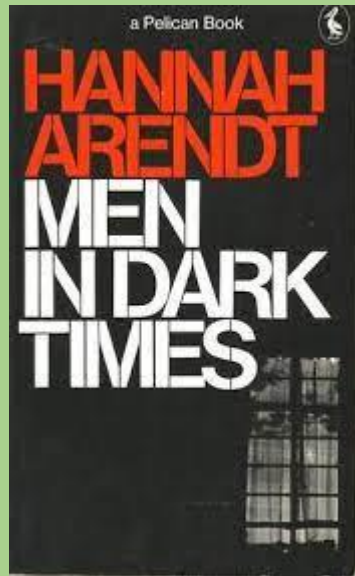
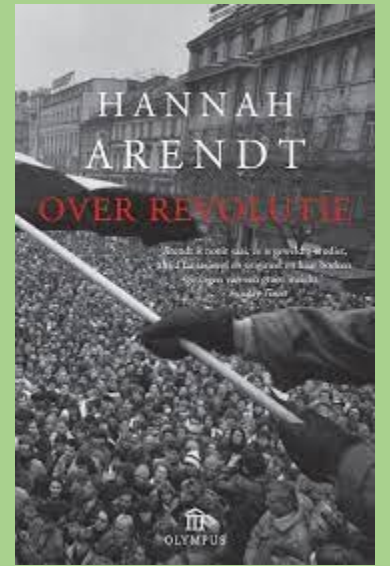
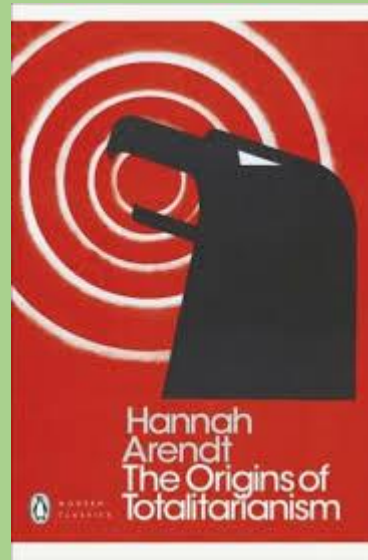
Programma

- Welkom
- Hannah Arendt in een notendop
- “Wij vluchtelingen” (1943)
- Antisemitisme en totalitarisme
- Denken
- Pauze
- Gesprek

Hannah Arendt in een notendop

- 1906 Hannover – Königsberg – Marburg – Freiburg – Heidelberg
- 1933 Parijs
- 1941 aan de Frans-Spaanse grens – New York
- 1943 “We Refugees” en een stroom van artikelen
- 1951 *The Origins of Totalitarianism*
- 1958 *The Human Condition*
- 1963 *Eichmann in Jeruzalem*
- 1970 *Denken* (Gifford Lectures)
- 1975, 4 december † New York (1978 *The Life of the Mind*)





“Wij vluchtelingen” (1943)

- Een van de eerste Engelstalige artikelen van Arendt
- Context
- Inhoud
- De “toon” van dit artikel
- Is assimilatie gedoemd te mislukken?



“Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning
to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of
your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost
to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden
door!”
Emma Lazarus (1883)

- Het (nood)lot van de zwaksten: “De gemeenschap van Europese volkeren is uiteengevallen toen en omdat ze het heeft laten gebeuren dat haar zwakste lid werd buitengesloten en vervolgd.”
- “Niemand wil ze hebben” (Linda Polman, 2019)

We Refugees

Hannah Arendt

In the first place, we don't like to be called "refugees." We ourselves call each other "newcomers" or "immigrants." Our newspapers are papers for "Americans of German language"; and, as far as I know, there is not and never was any club founded by Hitler-persecuted people whose name indicated that its members were refugees.

A refugee used to be a person driven to seek refuge because of some act committed or some political opinion held. Well, it is true we have had to seek refuge, but we committed no acts and most of us never dreamed of having any radical opinion. With us the meaning of the term "refugee" has changed. Now "refugees" are those of us who have been so unfortunate as to arrive in a new country without means and have to be assisted by Refugee Committees.

Before this war broke out we were even more sensitive about being called refugees. We did our best to prove to other people that we were just ordinary immigrants. We declared that we had departed of our own free will to countries of our choice, and we denied that our situation had anything to do with "so-called Jewish problems." Yes, we were

In order to forget more efficiently we rather avoid any allusion to concentration or internment camps we experienced in nearly all European countries—it might be interpreted as pessimism or lack of confidence in the new homeland. Besides, how often have we been told that nobody likes to listen to all that; hell is no longer a religious belief or a fantasy, but something as real as houses and stones and trees. Apparently nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human beings—the kind that are put in concentration camps by their foes and in internment camps by their friends.

Even among ourselves we don't speak about this past. Instead, we have found our own way of mastering an uncertain future. Since everybody plans and wishes and hopes, so do we. Apart from the general human attitudes, however, we try to clear up the future more scientifically. After so much bad luck we want a course as sure as a gun. Therefore, we leave the earth with all its uncertainties behind and we cast our eyes

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Before this war broke out we were even more sensitive about being called refugees. We did our best to prove to other people that we were just ordinary immigrants. We declared that we had departed of our own free will to countries of our choice, and we denied that our situation had anything to do with so-called Jewish problems." Yes, we were "immigrants" or "newcomers" who had left our country because, one fine day, it no longer suited us to stay, or for purely economic reasons. We wanted to rebuild our lives, that was all. In order to rebuild one's life one has to be strong and an optimist. So we are very optimistic.

Our optimism, indeed, is admirable, even if we say so ourselves. The story of our struggle has finally become known. We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world. We lost our language, the unaffected expression of feelings, the simplicity of gestures, the unadorned expression of feelings. We left our relatives in the Polish ghettos and our best friends have been killed in concentration camps, and that means the rupture of our private lives.

Nevertheless, as soon as we were saved—and most of us had to be saved several times—we started our new lives and tried to follow as closely as possible all the good advice our saviors passed on to us. We were told to forget; and we forgot quicker than anybody ever could imagine. In a friendly way we were reminded that the new country would become a new home; and after four weeks in France and six weeks in America, we pretended to be Frenchmen or Americans. The most optimistic among us would even add that their whole former life had been passed in a kind of unconscious exile and only their new country now taught them what it was all about. It looks like it is true we were told to forget, and when we are told to forget about our former

up to the sky. The stars tell us—
Hitler will be defeated and we
We think the stars more reliable
from the stars when we should
... know the best often
candid in every moment of our
who we are, what kind of pass
were filled out—and that Hitler
to fit into a world where you h
you buy your food.

Under such circumstances, St. I never can forget that young man certain kind of work, sighed out speak; I was Section-manager in Berlin." But there is also the

...dies and gentlemen of the next
means of their early next
more; it is real experience
ger any need of bew
Thus, in spite of the first
...up the

The less we are free to decide what more we try to put up a front, to were expelled from Germany because we had been so badly treated, hardly crossed the French border. We were very tired.

stand how our parents of the had such courage given and them adonai tive citizens murder, become one the man who when teach a world not

No, the life and the
optimism. There is a
home to prize for the
blems. In their

It is the same story all over the world. Europe the Nazis confiscated our property, we pay 30% of our wealth, like the meek and lowly Auslandssutschen. In Paris we come at 11 o'clock because we were late, because

helped me feel
singles, as with the

...that miserable
philanthropists,
and to understand that
destiny and not a
Jewish solidarity: we

much concerned

...be done, we already are so damnably
...daily lives to avoid anybody guessing
...port we have, where our birth certificates
...r didn't like us. We try the best we can
...ave to be sort of politically minded when

Bernard grows bigger and bigger. A man who, when expected to accept a job, "You don't know to whom you are talking." In Karstadt's [A great department store chain, founded in 1897, that has since expanded to other countries.]

deep despair of that middle-aged man shifts of different committees in order "And nobody here knows who I am!" is a dignified human being, he began cities and his big relations. He learnt is much easier to be accepted as a

...we are or to live as we like, the
hide the facts, and to play roles. We
because we were Jews. But having
time, we were ashamed to be
...the recovering of a
as a new creation for
to be, we reveal not
Jews. All our activi-

Frenchmen—at least, prospective Frenchmen—during the war we were interned as "boches" (the word for "Germans" in French). However, most of us had indeed

we could not even criticise a
we declared it as all right to be
niers volontaires" history has ever
the country, the French Government
firm; having been jailed because
nied because we were not

world, repeated again and again. In property; but in Brazil we have to not loyal member of the Bund der could not leave our homes after eight

Los Angeles are restricted
or identity is changed so frequently
actually are.

...better when we meet with Jews.
...nced that all Jews coming from

Frenchmen. In his first
in Germany and therefore
public applauded enthusiasm
to have learnt how to p

If patriotism were a m

and Polaks—what German Jewry really came from eastern Europe and called us Jackies. The second generation born in France and in opinion of the French Jewish family, you could be called a

1000

been a German one. Time went on and the situation, already under some Nazi pressure, grew more and more desperate, disregarding the fact that they lived in a free country, and were American citizens. Our Mr. Cohn then went to the United States and there a definite American attitude was

forced Mr. Cohn out of that country. He was expelled from the government and he never did receive a salary. He had already acquired a great skill in the management of administrative measures and he was very successful in his future life in France. Therefore, he was very successful in his future life in France.

Cohn. As long as Mr. Cohn actually is, a Jew, nobody has to go through.

to lose his self-dignity, and to be
which are infinite, as the
new personality is as
to the world. Whatever
thing but our insane
ies are directed to the

we don't want to be
German-speaking
we don't call ourselves
the world are
to hide the fact

...succeed; un-
hopeless sadness
...the word and
...you can hardly
...not mean the

to be born and
e adjust in pr
quite clear to
arently, how
he founder
asserted

speech by
ore we sh
niatic
ere m
ter of

Age Group	Percentage
18-24	~12%
25-34	~28%
35-44	~22%
45-54	~18%
55-64	~15%
65-74	~10%
75-84	~8%
85+	~5%

Olav Metzel (*1952)
Het werk is uit 2020

After so much time spent
we leave the earth with all its uncertainties behind and we

We Refugees

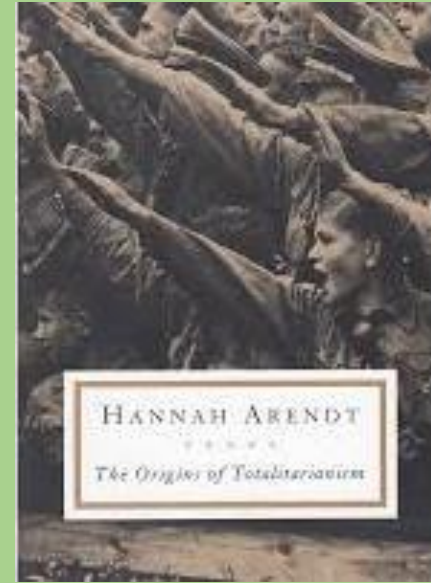
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Antisemitisme en totalitarisme

- Arendts studie (1951) in de context van de tijd:
De Koude Oorlog
- De rol van ideologie en taal
- De “beweging” als politieke entiteit, met bijbehorende bureaucratie
- Het kwaad als ondergrondse ‘schimmel’



- “Alles is mogelijk”: hoe totalitaire regimes te werk gaan: Arendts onthutsend actuele beschrijving
 - het aanwijzen van (willekeurige) bevolkingsgroepen en het vernietigen van de juridische persoon
 - het vernietigen van de morele persoon
 - ingrijpende maatregelen zoals “gelijk-schakeling”, persbreidel, boekverbranding enz.
 - de inrichting van concentratie- en vernietigingskampen



- Terreur als wet, omkering van waarden: “Gij zult doden.”
- De vernietiging van levensdomeinen en van de spontaniteit (onvoorspelbaarheid)
- Van het “radicale” kwaad naar de “banaliteit van het kwaad”
- “Het recht om rechten te hebben” is voor Arendt de kern van mensenrechten, d.w.z. het recht om tot een gemeenschap te behoren

- Arendt: de ideale onderdaan in een totalitaire staat is niet de overtuigde nazi of communist, maar de mens “voor wie het onderscheid tussen feit en fictie en het onderscheid tussen waar en onwaar niet meer bestaat”.

Denken

- Vrijwel al Arendts werk van na 1963 draait om de verwerking van het Eichmann-proces
- Leidende vragen daarbij: wat is er (“in hemelsnaam”) gebeurd, hoe kunnen we dat “ooit” begrijpen?
- Zou het denken – **in een zeer specifieke betekenis!** – een dam kunnen opwerpen tegen het kwaad?

- “We weerstaan het kwaad door ons niet door het oppervlakkige van de dingen te laten meeslepen, maar door stil te staan en te gaan nadenken, dat wil zeggen: ons naar een andere dimensie te verplaatsen dan die van het leven van alledag” [citaat sept. 1963]
- Denken vanuit het perspectief van anderen: “erweiterte Denkungsart” (Kant)

- Arendts onverwoestbare geloof in “goede taal” en het “goede” van taal ...
- “Het is niet de Duitse taal geweest die knettergek geworden is” [citaat uit 1964]

Tot slot

- Sprankjes hoop, ondanks alles
- Arendts steeds terugkerende beroep op Sint-Augustinus en “nataliteit”: *opdat er een begin zij, werd de mens geschapen*
- Mensen als beginners
- De verdediging van de republiek
- *Amor mundi* is niet gegeven, maar een opdracht

Vragen voor het gesprek

- Zal “beter denken” een dam kunnen opwerpen tegen het kwaad? Zit het kwaad niet (ook) in het denken zelf?
- Zijn mensenrechten ooit te “funderen” ?
- Arendt ziet bedreigingen voor de wereld, maar ook sprankjes hoop. Ziet u die ook? Welke?