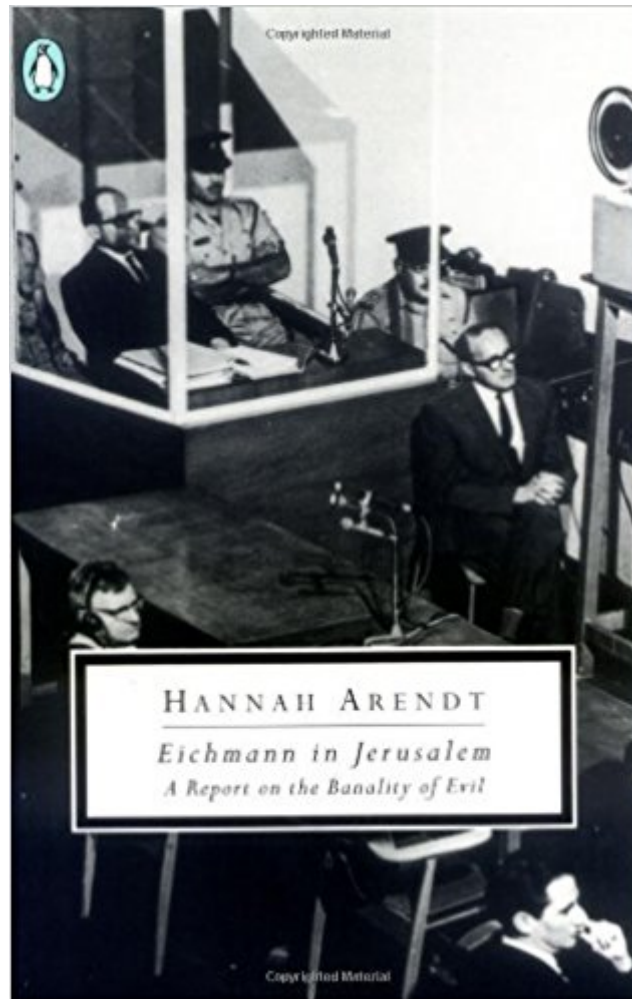


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Eichmann In Jerusalem: A Report On The Banality Of Evil



Synopsis

This report on the trial of German Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann first appeared as a series of articles in *The New Yorker* in 1963. This edition contains further factual material that came to light after the trial, as well as Arendt's postscript commenting on the controversy that arose over her book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Before there was the O.J. Simpson double homicide trial there was the Eichmann trial. Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* provides insight into one of the most publicized "show trials" ever. After the Nuremberg trial hundreds of Nazis were still in hiding or had taken assumed identities outside of Europe. Adolph Eichmann was one of these individuals. The Israeli Mossad kidnapped him and brought him back to Israel to stand trial for "crimes against humanity" for his role in the Holocaust. Eichmann was abducted in Argentina where he was struggling with his anonymity. Eichmann hated losing his identity as a powerful Nazi. After being kidnapped, but before being flown to Israel Eichmann was asked to consent to being brought up on charges against humanity, which he did. Eichmann may have had a difficult time living without his former social standing and identity. Arendt's book is a landmark in the workings of the Nazi machine that tortured, raped, and killed over 11 million Europeans for their religion, sexual orientation, political ideas, and nationality. However, the Eichmann trial centers more on the role Eichmann had in the "Final Solution" to the Jewish Question. Eichmann was charged with being a key player in the destruction and eradication of European Jewry. The book and Arendt's theory regarding "the banality

of evil" has created controversy since its inception in 1963. In 1963 Arendt was sent to Jerusalem to follow the Eichmann trial for *The New Yorker*. She published a series of articles over the course of the trial. It is often remarked by critics of the book that Arendt was not present for even half of the trial, yet the book is considered one of the principal books on the trial, if not the primary.

I am delighted to see this classic back in print. Jewish author Hannah Arendt has provided a wealth of timeless information that goes far beyond the trial of the German war criminal Adolf Eichmann. This review is based on the original (1964) edition. Arendt (p. 39) gives the readers a taste of the scale of the Kristallnacht (November 1938): 7,500 Jewish shop windows broken, all synagogues burned, and 20,000 Jewish men incarcerated in concentration camps. In common with many others who wrote during the first two decades after WWII, Arendt (p. 5, 11-12) addresses the issue of Jewish passivity in the face of death during the later roundups and transports to the death camps. Arendt briefly discusses the fate of Jews of some individual European nations. She mentions the conniving of the Bulgarians (with, of course, the implied freedom to do so) performed in order to avoid sending their Jews to the death camps, and the fact that Finland, Germany's ally, was never seriously pressured to turn over her 2,000 Jews to be murdered (p. 170). Clearly, the latter part of the oft-repeated statement, "Not all of the victims of the Nazis were Jews, but all Jews were victims of the Nazis" is incorrect. Throughout this work, Arendt gives various biographical details of Adolf Eichmann. For example, she mentions that he was a *Gottgläubiger* (p. 27), a Nazi term for those who had broken with Christianity, and which Eichmann maintained right up to the very moment of his hanging, having refused the solace and Bible reading of a Protestant minister (p. 252). Arendt briefly discusses Hitler's flouting of the Versailles treaty and his rise to power. While Jan T.

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