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0521477735 - Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought

Margaret Canovan

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1 Introduction

1. Hannah Arendt is one of the great outsiders of twentieth-century political thought, at once strikingly original and disturbingly unorthodox. Ever since the publication of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1951 her writings have attracted great interest and intense controversy, and during her lifetime her reputation was affected by sharp swings in intellectual fashion. *Totalitarianism* itself was first acclaimed as a profound analysis of Nazism and Stalinism and then dismissed as a piece of Cold War propaganda; *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution* were received in some circles as classic defences of the 'participatory' politics that became fashionable in the sixties, but deplored in others as baseless attacks on the social concerns of modern politics. Most hotly debated of all was *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, published in 1963, which was regarded by many as an act of disloyalty to the Jewish community. After her death in 1975 these particular controversies died down, but her standing as a political theorist remained debatable. Her defenders regarded her as the theorist who had done most to reassert the value of politics in an age when it had largely become subordinate to social and economic concerns. Her critics pointed to her rejection of ordinary democratic politics in favour of models drawn from ancient city-states or modern revolutions, and felt that she had little to say about politics here and now.

In recent years, however, Arendt's reputation has been growing again, as some of her ideas seem not only to have survived the passage of time but to have taken on a new relevance. One example is her thirty-year-old account of the way in which totalitarian movements construct a fictitious ideological world, which foreshadowed the analysis of communist regimes by dissident intellectuals in the years before the East European revolutions.¹ Another is to be found in those revolutions themselves, which seemed to offer some confirmation of her claim that power is less a matter of

¹ *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3rd edition (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1967) 341–64. (This edition is referred to below as OT3.) Cf. V. Havel, 'The Power of the Powerless' in Havel et al. (ed. J. Keane), *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (London, Hutchinson, 1985) 23–39.

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weapons and resources than of people acting in concert. Again, her revival of classical republican themes, which seemed so eccentric in the academic world of the 1950s, anticipated the recent interest in civic humanism.² Above all, since Anglo-American thought began at last to feel the influence of Heidegger and Nietzsche and their descendants, many aspects of Arendt's work, from her anti-foundationalism to her literary manner, have ceased to be stumbling-blocks. Interest in her work is now widespread, and seems likely to continue to grow. There is one oddity about her current standing, however, which is that in spite of the attention her writings have attracted, they have been little understood. The critical literature contains an unusually high proportion of attacks on positions that, arguably, she did not in fact hold.

It is to this situation that the present book is addressed. Its aim (apparently modest but actually quite far-reaching) is to discover and explain what Arendt's political thought is about. I hope to persuade the reader not only that she has been much misunderstood, but also that her thought is even more original and stimulating than is usually appreciated. I shall argue that the central point of her theory of totalitarianism has largely been missed; that her theory of action, like the rest of her political thought, is rooted in her response to totalitarianism and is not an exercise in nostalgia for the Greek polis; that she has important and relevant things to say about morals and politics, about authority and foundationalism, and about many other topics of political thought. First of all, though, there is an obvious objection to be met: how is it that so many of us have managed *not* to understand her up to now? This conundrum is the subject of the next section.

2. Arendt did not make great efforts to communicate her ideas. As she once explained in an interview, the motive behind her work was her own desire to understand, and writing was part of the process of understanding. If this meant that others shared her insights, that was a satisfaction to her, but she suggested half-seriously that if she been blessed with a good enough memory to be able to remember all her thoughts without working them out on paper, she might never have written anything.³ Misreadings of her books left her largely unmoved. She declared on another occasion that 'each time you write something and you send it out into the world . . .

² e.g. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975).

³ G. Gaus, *Zur Person: Porträts in Frage und Antwort* (Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1965) 13. In saying this, Arendt may well have been thinking of her husband, Heinrich Blücher, a thinker and talker who did *not* write. See the invaluable biography of Arendt by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1982) 135.

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everybody is free to do with it what he pleases . . . You should not try to hold your hand now on whatever may happen to what you have been thinking for yourself.⁴ This unusual sense of detachment from her readers was part of her more general detachment from academic debate, that ‘majestic indifference’ to the standard academic literature on her subject on which Sheldon Wolin commented when reviewing her last book.⁵ Rather than being contributions to public discussion, her best-known writings were essentially inward-looking, part of the endless dialogue with oneself that seemed to her to constitute the life of the mind.⁶

There are a number of ways in which this inward-looking quality of her thought has given rise to misunderstanding. For one thing, although her published writings are voluminous, they are only part of the deposit laid down by her endless process of reflection and writing. The books for which she is best known rise like islands out of a partly submerged continent of thought, some of it recorded in obscure articles, some of it only in unpublished writings. As we shall see on a number of occasions in the course of this study, unless one is aware of the reflective context to which passages in the books belong one is likely to misinterpret them.

In themselves, too, Arendt’s books invite misunderstanding, for they are often condensed and allusive. Their form is symphonic rather than sequential, interweaving and developing themes rather than presenting an argument. She often tries to say more (and particularly to make more conceptual distinctions) than can be comfortably digested, and since she does not warn her readers before using ordinary terms in special senses,⁷ it is very easy to miss the significance of what she is saying, particularly when (as is often the case) she is saying something unexpected.

Indeed, the exceptional originality of her ideas is itself a constant source of misunderstanding. Originality seems to have been something she did not seek or advertise, but that she could not avoid.⁸ As far as explicit commitments go, her intention was often the phenomenological one of trying to be true to experience.⁹ She continually stressed that what set her

⁴ ‘Remarks’ to the American Society of Christian Ethics (1973) MSS Box 70 011828.

⁵ S. Wolin, ‘Stopping to Think’, *New York Review of Books* (26 October 1978) 16.

⁶ *The Life of the Mind* (referred to below as *L of M*) vol. I: *Thinking* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1978) 185.

⁷ For example, her distinctions between ‘compassion’, ‘pity’ and ‘solidarity’ have given rise to considerable misunderstanding and disapproval: see chapter 5 below.

⁸ ‘Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt’ in M. A. Hill (ed.), *Hannah Arendt: the Recovery of the Public World* (New York, St Martin’s Press, 1979) 336.

⁹ e.g. ‘Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt’ 308; ‘Action and the “Pursuit of Happiness”’ in *Politische Ordnung und menschliche Existenz: Festgabe für Eric Voegelin* (Munich, Beck, 1962) 2, 7, 9–10, 12; Cf. P. Stern and J. Yarbrough, ‘Hannah Arendt’, *The American Scholar* 47 (Summer 1978) 372; B. Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy* (London, Macmillan, 1981) 68–72; L.P. and S.K. Hinchman, ‘In Heidegger’s Shadow: Hannah Arendt’s Phenomenological Humanism’, *Review of Politics* 46 (April 1984) 183–211.

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off thinking was some actual political event, while her objection to the dominant Western tradition of political philosophy was that it had distorted the actual experiences of political actors. As she herself was well aware, however, curious things could happen to events and experiences once they entered that space 'between past and future' that is the domain of thought.¹⁰ Her writings on Nazism and Stalinism, or on the French and American Revolutions, are in a sense concerned with actual political experiences, whether contemporary or historical, but only in a rather roundabout way. What her work most resembles is some medieval manuscript on the pages of which dragons and griffins climb in and out of the letters, and leaves and tendrils twine about the words: a marvellous work of art, wonderfully bejewelled, but in which the text is 'illuminated' in a way that is liable to distract attention from it.

Particularly in dealing with the past, Arendt seemed to combine two different approaches, only one of which was the phenomenological impulse to get behind abstractions to experience. In this latter mood she could find comfort for the breakdown of European civilisation that she had witnessed by seeing in the collapse of traditional thinking 'the great chance to look upon the past with eyes undistracted by any tradition' and 'to dispose of a tremendous wealth of raw experiences'.¹¹ As we shall see, it was in this spirit that she set out to recover the political experiences of 'plurality' which had, she thought, been obscured and distorted by the influence of Platonic philosophy. Along with this phenomenological humility, however, went another, apparently different, approach to the treasures of the past, which she described in one of her best essays, that on her friend, Walter Benjamin.

Benjamin had been a fanatical collector of fragments and aphorisms, whose ambition it was to produce a work consisting entirely of quotations. Speaking of him as a 'poetic thinker', Arendt meditated on Shakespeare's song 'Full fathom five', and on the 'pearl diver' who fishes in the depths of the past for remains that have suffered a 'sea-change'. The diver's purpose is not to excavate the sea floor, 'but to pry loose the rich and the strange, the pearls and the coral in the depths', guided by the belief that 'the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization'.¹² This kind of deliberately arbitrary use of fragments recovered from the past¹³ is liable to

¹⁰ 'Preface: the Gap Between Past and Future', and 'Truth and Politics', both in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York, Viking Press, 1968) 13, 227.

¹¹ 'Tradition and the Modern Age' in *Between Past and Future* 28; *L of M I* 12.

¹² 'Walter Benjamin 1892–1940' in *Men in Dark Times* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1970) 205–6. On Arendt's debt to Benjamin, and on the tensions in her view of the past, see S. Benhabib, 'Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative', *Social Research* 57/1 (Spring 1990) 188–96.

¹³ For evidence that the arbitrariness was indeed deliberate, see 'Action and the "Pursuit of Happiness"' 2–3; *L of M I* 212.

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conflict with the phenomenological ambition to recover raw experience, causing further confusion for Arendt's readers. The metaphor of 'crystallization' perhaps describes her own way of holding the two approaches together; for while it may be possible to see through a crystal to the ground in which it is embedded, it is in the nature of the same crystal to have many facets, reflecting light from different sources and glittering with inexhaustible significance.¹⁴ The multiple meanings that she found in her chosen sources are further complexities that make her thought hard to understand, and even harder to summarise.

As if these sources of confusion were not enough, there is another that lies in a tension at the heart of her enterprise, in what one might perhaps call her unsystematic system-building. Arendt did not want to build a system of political philosophy. On the infrequent occasions when she made statements about her approach to her work she emphasised its tentativeness and flexibility.¹⁵ Authentic political thought necessarily arose, she believed, out of real political events, and had to be rethought in response to them.¹⁶ In any case, thinking itself (as she argued in *The Life of the Mind*) was like Penelope's weaving, constantly undoing its own construction.¹⁷

This anti-systematic view of thinking, to which she was deeply committed, was something that she inherited from the thinkers who made most impression on her in her youth. Her first intellectual hero, Kierkegaard,¹⁸ had set out on his philosophical adventures by attacking orthodox Hegelianism and opposing to that abstract, systematic, 'objective' thinking his own 'subjective thinking' which 'puts everything in process'.¹⁹ This message was reinforced by Nietzsche, and by Arendt's teachers, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. One of Jaspers' earliest insights as he moved into philosophy from the medical science in which he had been trained was that 'there is such a thing as meaningful thinking without results'.²⁰ His own philosophy does not present a system, and

¹⁴ For a vivid account of Arendt's use of quotations and arbitrary interpretations of past writers when teaching, see Stern and Yarbrough, 'Hannah Arendt' 373, 376. For much less forgiving comments on her use of historical sources, see J.N. Shklar, 'Hannah Arendt as Pariah', *Partisan Review* 50/1 (1983) 67, 69.

¹⁵ 'Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt' 338.

¹⁶ 'Action and the "Pursuit of Happiness"' 2; 'Epilogue: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution', *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd edition (London, Allen, and Unwin, 1958) 482.

¹⁷ *L of M I* 88.

¹⁸ Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 45.

¹⁹ S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. W. Lowrie (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1944) 68.

²⁰ K. Jaspers, 'Philosophical Autobiography' in P. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (New York, Tudor, 1957) 31. On Arendt's debt to Jaspers, see L.P. and S.K. Hinchman, 'Existentialism Politicized: Arendt's Debt to Jaspers', *Review of Politics* 533 (1991) 435–68.

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speaks of 'building by tearing down what we have built'.²¹ Similarly, although Arendt's debt to her other teacher, Heidegger, is a complex matter to which we shall return in due course, what she later remembered learning from him was not so much a doctrine as the activity of thinking itself, 'unceasingly active', continually opening up in the forest of experience paths that lead to no resting-place.²²

When she sets off, then, to think 'without a banister' to hold on to,²³ reflecting freely upon events, and writing in a way that records trains of thought instead of presenting a theory, her readers are naturally led to expect that her thoughts will not be particularly consistent, and will certainly not in any way resemble a system. The fact is, however, that Arendt had a naturally systematic mind that tended of its own accord toward consistency and synthesis. For all her inclination to see thinking in terms of Penelope's self-destructive weaving, the trains of thought she herself spun linked themselves together as if of their own accord into an elaborate and orderly spider's web of concepts, held together by threads that were none the weaker for being hard to see. As with Hegel, this means that one cannot understand one part of her thought unless one is aware of its connections with all the rest.

If there is in some sense a systematic network of thought concealed under the informal surface of Arendt's writings, how is this best approached? Should a would-be interpreter do for her the job she did not do for herself, and build the system that is implicit in her work?²⁴ The main objection to this approach is in line with her own explicit objections to system-building, namely that it would freeze into a static construction what is actually a dynamic and unfinished process, and pretend that issues were settled when they were not.²⁵ Her thinking about politics took the form of a set of complex and interrelated trains of thought, in the course of which she did indeed establish a great many settled positions, firm conceptual distinctions and interconnected commitments, but which remained open-ended and incomplete. As two of her former graduate students commented when describing her teaching, she 'succeeded in . . . saying something definite – taking a stand, so to speak – and yet preserving an atmosphere of openness'.²⁶

²¹ K. Jaspers, *Philosophy*, trans. E.B. Ashton (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969) vol. I 34; Cf. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 74.

²² 'Martin Heidegger at 80' in M. Murray (ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978) 296–8. On Arendt's debt to Heidegger, see Hinchman and Hinchman, 'In Heidegger's Shadow'.

²³ 'Hannah Arendt on Hannah Arendt' 336. Cf. Kierkegaard, 'out upon the deep with 70,000 fathoms of water under him', *Stages on Life's Way* (London, Oxford University Press, 1940) 402. ²⁴ e.g. Parekh, *Hannah Arendt* xii.

²⁵ *The Human Condition* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958) 170–1. (This edition is referred to below as *HC*.) See chapter 7 below.

²⁶ Stern and Yarbrough, 'Hannah Arendt' 375.

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Instead of trying to construct a static system for her, therefore, what we need to do is to follow her thought trains, to situate her best-known works within them and to show how they were related to one another. Such an approach will have the additional advantage of allowing us to follow her reflections as they developed, and in many cases to trace them to their origins. As we shall see, most of them have their roots in her experience of the overwhelming political catastrophes that she summed up under the heading of ‘totalitarianism’.

This is important, because the most common reason why Arendt is misunderstood is that readers tend to start in the wrong place when trying to interpret her thought. It is not at all surprising that commentators such as George Kateb and Bhikhu Parekh should start from *The Human Condition* rather than from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, for the former appears to have a more definite structure than her other books, it is evidently concerned with fundamentals, and it seems on the face of it to represent a new beginning in Arendt’s political thinking after her earlier work on Nazism and Stalinism. Given that *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is no longer admired by many political scientists, there seems no reason to study it before setting out to understand what is generally regarded as Arendt’s real contribution to political thought. Unfortunately, this approach is (as I hope to show) seriously misleading. Not only is *The Human Condition* itself much more closely related to *The Origins of Totalitarianism* than it appears to be, but virtually the entire agenda of Arendt’s political thought was set by her reflections on the political catastrophes of the mid-century. Although this is something that has been recognised by a number of commentators,²⁷ its implications have not been worked out, and they are in fact far-reaching. Many of the things she had to say, including some of her most controversial statements, look quite different when they are put into their proper context within her reflections. Many of her positions become more intelligible – though not necessarily more persuasive. As we shall see, her political thought becomes in some ways more relevant to current concerns, and in some ways less so.

It will be claimed in this study, then, that responses to the most dramatic events of her time lie at the very centre of Arendt’s thought. In a sense, her political thinking is very closely bound to political events: but only in a sense, because, as we have seen, her thought is also insistently inward-looking. Tensions between the solitary life of the mind and the public world of politics continually complicate her work, adding to the potentialities for misunderstanding. For although the impact of Nazism led her to react

²⁷ e.g. R. Beiner, ‘Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: the Uncommenced Dialogue’, *Political Theory* 18/2 (May 1990) 251; B. Crick, ‘On Rereading *The Origins of Totalitarianism*’ in Hill, *Hannah Arendt* 43; C. Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Polity, 1988) 48.

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against all forms of unworldliness in favour of commitment to political responsibility, the political thought to which this eventually led her consisted of reflections of a peculiarly private kind. The call to respond to what was happening in the real world was constantly at odds with the withdrawal from the world involved in thinking, giving rise to a curious blend of speculative interpretation and sober common sense. It was in her last, unfinished work that Arendt meditated most explicitly on the tensions between politics and the life of the mind, but she was aware of these tensions for most of her adult life. A brief look at her own path towards political action and thought will help us to understand the problems involved.

3. As a young adult, Arendt was (as she later acknowledged) quite uninterested in politics²⁸ and immersed in intellectual interests of a peculiarly unworldly kind. In the light of her subsequent political commitments it is piquant that her doctoral thesis, on 'The Concept of Love in Saint Augustine', should have been concerned with a form of Christianity for which rejection of *this* world and its concerns was an essential prerequisite for the love of God.

Arendt went on thinking about Augustine for the rest of her life, and in the aftermath of totalitarianism she felt a particular kinship with one who had lived, as he did, in the dark times of the collapsing Roman Empire.²⁹ Her response to her own 'dark times', however, came to involve a thoroughgoing rejection of anything resembling his approach. Although she drew on Augustine³⁰ in constructing her concept of the 'world', it became in her thought something to be cherished rather than rejected, something, moreover, to which pure Christian goodness might even pose a threat.³¹ A quotation from Augustine, 'that a beginning be made man was created',³² later became for her a reminder of the possibility of human action in apparently hopeless circumstances, but it is significant that this was something she had to add to her original dissertation when, for a time, she later thought of revising it for publication in English.³³

What forced her out of her life as an unpolitical intellectual studying

²⁸ P. Gay, *Weimar Culture: the Outsider as Insider* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1968) 70.

²⁹ 'Understanding and Politics', *Partisan Review* 20/4 (July–August 1953) 390.

³⁰ as well as Heidegger: see chapter 4 below.

³¹ See chapter 5 below. ³² OT3 479.

³³ 'Love and Saint Augustine: an Essay in Philosophical Interpretation', translated by E.B. Ashton, MSS Box 66. This manuscript includes the beginning of a revised version on which Arendt worked in the 1960s, but which she did not complete. In the present connection, compare 033190 with 033293. Young-Bruehl (*Hannah Arendt*) 490–500, gives a synopsis of the dissertation. There is a summary with discussion in P. Boyle SJ, 'Elusive Neighborliness: Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Saint Augustine' in J.W. Bernauer SJ (ed.), *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Boston/ Dordrecht/ Lancaster, Martinus Nijhoff, 1987) 81–113.

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antipolitical theology was of course the threat posed by Nazism, which was by the late 1920s making it increasingly difficult for German Jews to ignore politics. Prior to that time, Arendt had been no more interested in Jewishness than in politics itself. She had few connections with Jewish religious or cultural traditions, and found the 'Jewish question' (as she later confessed) 'boring'.³⁴ As Nazism gained strength, however, she moved increasingly in Zionist circles, acting according to the principle that, "When one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself *as a Jew*." Not as a German, not as a world-citizen, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man.³⁵

By 1930 it had become clear to her that regardless of her distance from Jewish religion, culture and language, she was in the eyes of the world not an intellectual of German culture but simply a Jew. She worked out her response to this situation by way of a study of an earlier Jewish German who had found herself in a rather similar situation, Rahel Varnhagen, one of the early-nineteenth-century German Romantics. Although Arendt later denied that there was anything autobiographical about this study,³⁶ she evidently felt close to Rahel,³⁷ and the very harshness of the judgements she passed on her predecessor suggests a lack of distance. Arendt criticised Rahel for having spent so much of her life trying to escape from Jewishness into assimilation before finally accepting both her birth and the position as 'pariah' that went along with it.³⁸ Her mistake, in Arendt's view, was that, like so many other Jews, she did not think in political terms and see the denial of rights involved in her position. Instead, she regarded Jewishness simply as a personal misfortune, like a limp or a stutter.

Rahel Varnhagen contains a critique not only of attempts at assimilation and the political naiveté that prompted them, but also of the unworldly introspection that had allowed Rahel and other prominent figures in German culture to be so unpolitical. The Romantic cult of feeling and the fascination with an inner world of ideas and experiences blinded their devotees to reality,³⁹ and as Arendt worked her own way to political consciousness she laid great stress on the need to get outside oneself into the world shared with others, to become aware of and to respond to political reality.

³⁴ Arendt to Jaspers, 7 September 1952, *Hannah Arendt/ Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926–1969*, ed. L. Köhler and H. Saner (Munich, Piper, 1985) 234; Cf. Shklar, 'Hannah Arendt as Pariah' 64–77.

³⁵ Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 109; Gaus, *Zur Person* 20.

³⁶ Gaus, *Zur Person* 21. ³⁷ Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 56.

³⁸ *Rahel Varnhagen: the Life of a Jewish Woman*, trans. R. and C. Winston (San Diego, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974) 227. For an illuminating discussion of Arendt's treatment of Rahel, see D. Barnouw, *Visible Spaces: Hannah Arendt and the German-Jewish Experience* (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) 30–71.

³⁹ *Rahel Varnhagen* 9–12, 21.

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The practical dangers of a gap between inner experience and reality became cruelly obvious in 1933, when many German intellectuals demonstrated their political irresponsibility by giving Hitler their support. In disgust, Arendt abandoned her academic milieu for practical activity within the Zionist movement,⁴⁰ first in Germany, then, after a brief spell in German police custody, as a refugee in France. There she met her future husband, Heinrich Blücher, a revolutionary socialist from whom (as she later told Karl Jaspers) she learned to think politically.⁴¹ There she also found inspiration in the writings of an earlier Jewish radical, Bernard Lazare, the ‘conscious pariah’ who had drawn from experience of the Dreyfus Affair the lesson that the situation of the Jews was a political one to which the answer must be equally political: a radical alliance with all the oppressed people of Europe to fight for freedom.⁴² Arendt’s new activism had a distinctly radical tinge which included a pronounced hostility to the bourgeoisie, including the Jewish bourgeoisie. As late as 1944, she was prepared to argue in print that instead of seeking the favour of the Great Powers, Zionist leaders should have adopted Lazare’s radical proposal ‘to organize the Jewish people in order to negotiate on the basis of a great revolutionary movement’, which ‘would have meant an alliance with all progressive forces in Europe’.⁴³

In 1941, after internment in a French camp, she was able to escape to the United States, where her continuing commitment to the Jewish cause took two forms. One was the study of antisemitism which gradually turned into a book on the antecedents of Nazism and then into *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The other was direct intervention in Jewish politics within America, particularly through columns in the German Jewish paper, *Aufbau*, for which she wrote from 1941 to 1945. She vehemently supported the campaign for a Jewish army to fight against Nazism alongside the Allies, and thereby to claim for the Jews the dignity of actors rather than accepting the passive role of victims. She was also highly critical of most of the various factions of Zionism, and particularly of schemes for a Jewish

⁴⁰ Gaus, *Zur Person* 19–20; Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 102–8, 138–9.

⁴¹ Arendt to Jaspers, 29 January 1946, *Briefwechsel* 67. Blücher had been involved while very young in the abortive Spartacist rising in Germany in 1918–19, headed by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and later with the Communist Party. See Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt* 124–8.

⁴² ‘The Jew as Pariah: a Hidden Tradition’ (April 1944), in the invaluable collection of Arendt’s ‘Jewish’ writings edited by Ron H. Feldman, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (New York, Grove Press, 1978) 76. See also Feldman’s ‘Introduction’ 31. Arendt later edited a collection of Lazare’s writings, *Job’s Dungheap* (New York, Schocken Books, 1948).

⁴³ ‘Zionism Reconsidered’ (1944) in *The Jew as Pariah* 152–3.