

# Review of: "Carl Friedrich's Path to "Totalitarianism""

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**Potential competing interests:** I am a non-resident member of Professor Turner's Center for Social and Political Thought, at the University of South Florida

To my mind, the first part of this article was especially interesting - I mean the part preceding the discussion of CF's list of totalitarian attributes. The first part investigated CF's theory of bureaucracy. And although CF distinguishes between bureaucracy (good) and party (bad), I was struck by the similarities between CF's anti-democratic paean to bureaucracy and that of writers such as Daniel A. Bell who laud "the China Model". Bell makes a broadly similar anti-democratic argument for the rule of experts - except that these are the experts of the CCP.

On CF and Hannah Arendt:

1. "Although Hannah Arendt's rival account of totalitarianism retained its influence longer, her account has always been treated as bound up with her own complex and controversial scholarly persona," p. 2. This is opaque; at least I don't understand it. Either the statement should be explained or omitted.
2. Also there is a sense in which the above statement is problematic. Arendt's account of totalitarianism is certainly more celebrated, more famous, more notorious than CF's. But paradoxically CF's approach to totalitarianism, identifying a syndrome of attributes, is far more influential than Arendt's. Look up almost any "definition" of totalitarianism, and one will find, usually without attribution, the CF list, in toto or in part. Arendt's view is heterodox and, oddly, less understood. For her, totalitarianism is not a centralized system of rule, it is essentially anarchic and chaotic. It is a form of government in which the party has not only captured the state, but runs the state like a movement. Arendt also denied Hitler's importance to National Socialism. Readers interested in her interpretation can contact me and I'll send them a few relevant materials.

Is the article worthy of publication? Certainly. It is well researched, well written and intellectually stimulating.