

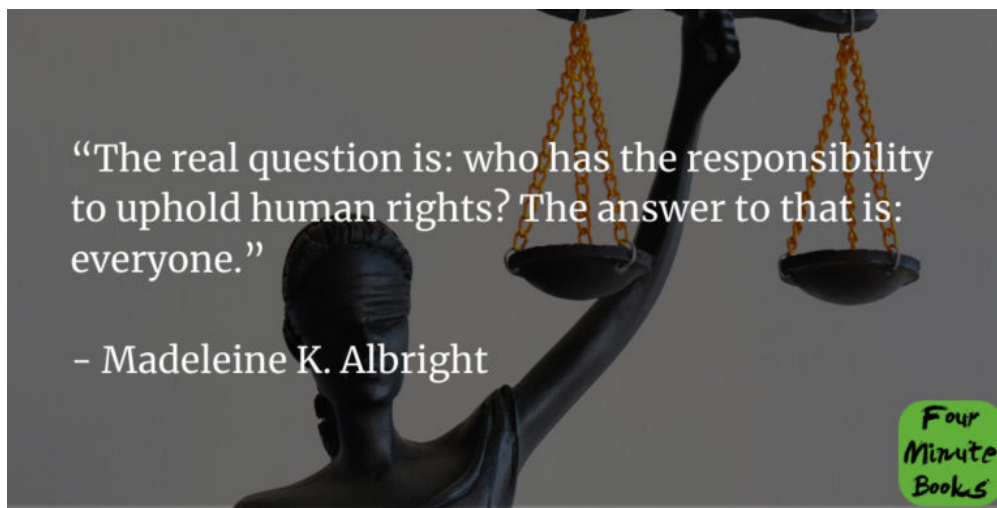
Fascism Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Fascism explores the nature behind this far-right authoritarian ideology, how it can rise to power in uncertain times and why it poses a serious threat even in our present days against our most democratic systems such as in the United States or Europe.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Fascism is a far-right ideology that usually draws its power from national anger, under the wing of charismatic manipulators like Benito Mussolini. They connect emotionally with their peers and convey public frustration into solidarity for a national purpose.

Many extreme political parties rise to power by democratic means. They are publicly elected as they convince people that they are the solution to the wrongs in their life. Usually, these result from a minority, a loss of territory, or an unfair treaty. It's never the individual who is to blame for their life, but an external factor.

Once they are elected, they privatize information and alter education with political biases. They take control of the media and informational outlets for propaganda purposes. In other words, the goal is to create an indoctrinated utopia. They want to do away with democracy.

Fascism is an educational piece on right-winged ideologies, the nature of tyrants, and their created systems. Its importance lies within its historical and present-day value. That's because learning about the past allows us to look into the future and raise better people.

Here are my three favorite lessons from the book:

1. Authoritarian parties often rise to power through democratic means.
2. We can always expect fascism to find its way back, history says.
3. Democracy is fragile, and we should defend it.

Lesson 1: In a fragile democracy, fascism can easily find its way to the top.

History is our best teacher. For this reason, we always have to look back and analyze. So let's see how fascism rose to power to begin with. Mussolini once stated that taking hold of power is like plucking a live chicken – do it as quietly as possible, without anyone noticing.

Such extreme political parties don't just get elected one day and do away with their opponents. Rather, they abide by the democratic rules at first. A perfect example of this would be Hitler. Nowadays, we can see the same happening in Turkey, with its leader Erdoğan.

Fascism, like other similar doctrines, often addresses the anxieties of people. It creates a movement under the leader's protective wings. And because people will always look for someone to blame their frustrations on, fascism can always find its way back.

According to The Economist's Democracy Index, we're experiencing a decline in democracy's health in 70 countries! Existing politicians, corruption, high unemployment, and frustration can make people lose faith in our current system.

Such tendencies can be observed in "*the land of the free*", for example. Donald Trump was quite popular among Americans as he praised other authoritarian governments. Or when he called out immigrants for stealing jobs from nationals and implicitly rising unemployment.

Lesson 2: Fascism is a recurring part of human history.

Personalities like Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin have painted the picture of fascism, nazism, and other atrocious doctrines. However, a quick look into the modern-day states can reveal more than we think. So let's take a look!

After World War I, extreme movements like fascism were a common occurrence. Why? Because states were weak. People were poor, unemployed, and depressed. This can be seen even in Britain, a country that praises freedom and democracy.

Again, we can see this phenomenon in India, where angry Hindu nationalists were concerned about Muslims. European states like Romania, Spain, or Czechoslovakia have also experienced fascist tendencies. Moreover, they all took place under similar patterns.

In Italy, Mussolini addressed the rejection of capitalists that are trying to exploit citizens. To prove his loyalty to the people, he removed over 35 000 politicians. In Britain, a fascist union promised economic protection by acting against immigrants.

Therefore, we can see how fascists rose to power by continuously promising to fight the “enemies of the state.” They promise to solve unemployment by eliminating immigrants that steal jobs. Or to eradicate corruption by mass-removing government officials.

Therefore, whenever people get too frustrated about these matters, extreme ideologies are more likely to appear. As we look around today, we can observe such tendencies in countries like Hungary, Venezuela, and even the United States.

Lesson 3: Democracy’s advocates should be aware of its fragility and work towards preserving it.

Now we know how fascism looks like and how it can infiltrate even the finest layers of democracy. So we have to look for ways to prevent that from happening. And how to protect the most effective way of governance we’ve discovered so far.

The wisdom of crowds may be real, but their frustration sure isn’t a legitimate reason to abolish democracy. Arguing that capitalism widens the gap between the rich and poor doesn’t prove this point. Nor does the thinking that drastic rulers can control the world.

Our world beginning to value skills over diplomas, and technology taking over human labor are two of the things that are causing anxiety today. And when people are looking for someone to blame for such things, anti-democratic arguments may seem convincing.

While economic and social circumstances today are not as bad as in post-war time, they surely aren’t ideal. In Europe, one in four young people is unemployed. Immigrants are settling across high-earning countries and ditching traditional professions.

Moreover, the world is facing a new issue: disinformation. With universal access to social media, gaslighting has never been easier. It is now cheaper than ever to spread fake news and incite rebellions. All because no one can differentiate between sources anymore.

With all this in mind, advocates of democracy have to fight constant battles to keep governments and their systems healthy. Yet, while fragile, this ideology is still the pylon of our modern society. And it proves to foster innovation and development.

Fascism Review

Madeleine Albright offers her readers a complex view of extreme ideologies and how they rise to power. Fascism is more than just a historical overview. Rather, it’s a tool for combating a present-day threat. It is a must-read for everyone willing to educate themselves on protecting democracy and getting to know its enemies.

Who would I recommend the Fascism summary to?

The history enthusiast, the person wanting to find out more about fascism and other far-right-wing ideologies, and citizens concerned about the political nature of the world.