

The Psychology of Totalitarianism

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Synopsis

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We bear witness to loneliness, free-floating anxiety, and fear giving way to censorship, loss of privacy, and surrendered freedoms. It is all spurred by a singular, focused crisis narrative that forbids dissident views and relies on destructive groupthink.

Totalitarianism is not a coincidence and does not form in a vacuum. It arises from a collective psychosis that has followed a predictable script throughout history, its formation gaining strength and speed with each generation—from the Jacobins to the Nazis and Stalinists—as technology advances. Governments, mass media, and other mechanized forces use fear, loneliness, and isolation to demoralize populations and exert control, persuading large groups of people to act against their own interests, always with destructive results.

In *The Psychology of Totalitarianism*, world-renowned Professor of Clinical Psychology Mattias Desmet deconstructs the societal conditions that allow this collective psychosis to take hold. By looking at our current situation and identifying the phenomenon of “mass formation”—a type of collective hypnosis—he clearly illustrates how close we are to surrendering to totalitarian regimes.

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