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Nora Steenberg and Ida E. Rydning Gusevik

## *In the Service of Evil* *Totalitarian Women*

Women who stood out in a male-dominated past were often celebrated – and rightly so. They were easily cast as historical heroes, particularly when they fought for progress, democracy and human rights.

But what about the women who devoted their lives to regimes, movements and ideologies on the wrong side of history?

*In the Service of Evil* brings eleven different women out of the footnotes. Not because they lacked influence, but because history has long been shaped by the belief that women cannot wield real power. Yet totalitarianism – defined by fanaticism, brutality and mass violence – was also shaped by women who organised, indoctrinated and exercised authority at the highest levels.

From Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in Nazi Germany to Jiang Qing during China's Cultural Revolution, and Ulrike Meinhof of the Red Army Faction, this book explores women who did not merely support totalitarian regimes, but helped to shape them.

This is not a book about women as victims. It presents its subjects as political actors driven by ideology, ambition and a will to power – and argues that their stories must be confronted, not erased. At a time when extremism is once again on the rise, *Totalitarian Women* offers a timely reminder: radicalisation has no gender.

Structured as a chronological journey through the history of totalitarianism, the book traces how radical ideologies emerge, evolve and collide across a century marked by war and upheaval.

## Nora Steenberg and Ida E. Rydning Gusevik

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Nora Steenberg (b. 1991) holds a Master's degree in History from the University of Oslo and Queen Mary University of London, specializing in totalitarian movements and conspiracy theories. She currently works as a cultural journalist and shares history content on TikTok and Instagram with an audience of 35,000 followers.



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