

Two New Research Centers

Jerome Kohn

THE HANNAH ARENDT CENTER AT THE NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY

As the first issue of the Hannah Arendt Newsletter went to press, the New School for Social Research in New York was just beginning to establish a Hannah Arendt Center. This Center will be dedicated to the preservation of Arendt's legacy and to fostering the kind of participation in public life that she described and also exemplified. The Center will literally be a center for the vast range of interests her ideas have generated; for drawing people to her work by making it more available; for discussions of Arendt's thought which are currently taking place throughout the world; for reaching out to people whose own work bears a natural relationship to Arendt; and, in general, for providing a richly talkative public space. We hope that the activities of the Hannah Arendt Center will renew interest in thinking about public life and will infuse political discourse with the kind of seriousness she gave to it.

The Hannah Arendt Center at the New School will have three general spheres of activity:

I. THE ARCHIVE

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, through conversations initiated by The New School, has provided a generous grant for the digitization of the entire Arendt Archive housed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Much of these materials will eventually be pub-

lished, but permission to publish or quote from the archive must be obtained in writing from the Hannah Arendt Literary Trust. In addition, the Center's archive will assemble a complete collection of secondary writings on Arendt, including unpublished dissertations and other writings.

II. THE PUBLIC SPACE

The Hannah Arendt Center will be a place where people interested in her work will be encouraged to gather for discussion, exchange, and debate. There will be a program for bringing to the Center, as Hannah Arendt Fellows, scholars and advanced students interested in using the archive for research, the fellowships forming part of a larger international exchange of faculty and students. The Center will foster such activities as an on-going seminar, conferences and symposia on topics related to Arendt's thought, forums for discussion of current political questions, and an annual lecture associated with a prize bestowed on someone who has made an outstanding contribution to public life.

III. WORDS & DEEDS

The Center will engage in a number of different kinds of project which reach out to larger communities in New York, other parts of America, Europe, and in regions of the world where Arendt's writings are currently being translated and studied. The work that emanates from the activities of the Center will be disseminated in various media: books, journals, news-

papers, television, radio broadcasts, and the internet. Educational ventures at the Center will prepare participants to reach out into schools and other institutions that aim at influencing public policy. The Center will also seek contact with people engaged in what Arendt called the *res publica*, including public officials and organizers of communities whose purpose is to help citizens carry out voter registration, affordable housing, renovation of neighborhoods, and improvement of schools.

Once the Hannah Arendt Center is established, the New School will work in close cooperation with Prof. Dr. Antonia Grunenberg, Director of the Hannah Arendt Research Center, at Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg, Germany. One of our first cooperative projects will be an international conference celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 2001.

The two Centers will have a joint international board of directors. While writing this the structure of the Hannah Arendt Center at the New School is being formed; it will be described in detail in future issues of this *Newsletter*.

Meanwhile all information and inquiries should be addressed in writing to: Jerome Kohn, Department of Philosophy, The Graduate Faculty, New School University, 65 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003

The opening of the Hannah Arendt Center at the New School University, New York and of the Hannah Arendt Zentrum at the Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany

Antonia Grunenberg

THE HANNAH ARENDT-ZENTRUM AT THE CARL VON OSSIETZKY UNIVERSITY OLDENBURG

The Hannah Arendt-Zentrum was opened in Oldenburg on 1 July 1999. The inauguration ceremony marked the successful conclusion of many years of preparation. One of the motives for establishing the centre was to search for the traces of the destroyed Jewish intellectual heritage in Germany. The portion of Hannah Arendt's papers in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. was copied, and the University of Memphis, Tennessee has also kindly provided copies of microfilms they have of considerable parts of the papers. Since the documents in Washington are currently being digitized and will not be available to the public for the next two years, Oldenburg is the only place where they can be studied.

Once digitalization is complete, the documents will be directly accessible. It is also planned to augment the archive of the Zentrum with papers preserved elsewhere, for example with copies of the letters in the Literaturarchiv Marbach from the exchanges with Martin Heidegger and with Karl Jaspers. In addition, an extensive collection of secondary literature will be built up, including dissertations and articles from journals.

The Hannah Arendt-Zentrum will also provide a meeting place for researchers, students and interested members of the general public, where they can work, discuss questions of interpretation and

research matters. Arendt's understanding of the public realm is based on the interaction of political thought and public action. In this sense, the Hannah Arendt-Zentrum will also extend beyond the merely academic, and will work together with various other public institutions and prominent public figures. This has already begun with the cooperation with the Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought in Bremen, and the Hannah Arendt Tage in Zurich and Hannover.

The Zentrum attaches great importance to international cooperation. The most important partner is the Hannah Arendt Center at the New School University in New York, under Jerome Kohn. There will also be cooperation between the Hannah Arendt-Zentrum and the University of Memphis/Tennessee. A series of conferences are planned with the Hannah Arendt Center in New York, beginning in 2001 with a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Origins of Totalitarianism*. As the cooperation grows it is also envisaged that there will be an exchange of lecturers and post-graduates between Oldenburg and New York.

And finally a major project, for which the first preparatory steps have been taken, is a critical edition of Arendt's works. This will also involve cooperation with the American partner institution, and with the Hannah Arendt Literary Trust.

The archive has regular opening times. Queries via e-mail can be directed to: Arendt-Zentrum@uni-oldenburg.de Since there is only a limited capacity, it is advisable to register personally.

Contact: Prof. Antonia Grunenberg, Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Institute of Political Science II, PO Box, 26111 Oldenburg, Germany e-mail: Antonia.Grunenberg@uni-oldenburg.de

TAGUNGS-ANKÜNDIGUNG

DAS JAHRHUNDERT VERSTEHEN H. ARENDT – T. W. ADORNO

Tagung vom 10. bis 12. Februar 2000 an der Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg.

Die Konferenz wird sich auf vier Fragenkomplexe konzentrieren: Vertreibung und jüdische Identität, Theorien totaler Herrschaft und Theorien der Moderne; Zeitdiagnose und Stellenwert der Gesellschaftstheorie; zeitgeschichtliche Analysen der Nachkriegsgesellschaft. Mit Dagmar Barnow, Alexander Garcia Düttmann, Alfons Söllner, Sigrid Weigel, Albrecht Wellmer, u.a.