

# Can the Political Judgment Hannah Arendt Exercised in Her Own Life Help Us to Address the Problem of Acting Politically Today?<sup>1</sup>

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To enter on political action has always required courage, because of the sheer inertial mass of what it sets out to displace, and even more so because of the contingencies that keep action's outcome from being known before its unrest subsides and a recharged world resettles.

Jerome Kohn<sup>2</sup>

No doubt action, political action constituted a major realm of Hannah Arendt's thinking and her published work. Her views on political action have received countless comments and interpretations; they were used and misused by

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<sup>1</sup> Inauguration of "The Hannah Arendt Center of the Instituto Norberto Bobbio", São Paulo Brazil, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome Kohn, "No Revolution Required", *The Intellectual Origins of the Global Financial Crisis*, Fordham University Press, New York 2012, pp 36. Jerome Kohn is Trustee of "The Hannah Arendt Blücher Literary Trust" and Director of The Hannah Arendt Center at The New School for Social Research. He is the editor of numerous volumes of Hannah Arendt's work, including *Responsibility and Judgment*, *The Promise of Politics*, *Essays in Understanding*, and *Hannah Arendt: The Jewish Writings* (with Ronald H. Feldman).

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political activists. However, only rarely have her personal decisions in matters of political activity been given as much attention as her theoretical views.

Ursula Ludz<sup>3</sup>

I want to begin, by thanking Professor Cláudia Perrone-Moisés, Professor Celso Lafer, and Raymundo Magliano-Filho for the opportunity to speak today. It is an honor to be here. As a young man I knew Hannah Arendt, studied briefly with her husband Heinrich Blücher, and then collaborated with her on his philosophical legacy. Unlike many of the men and women who studied with Hannah Arendt, I was not a philosopher or political scientist. I was not looking for a personal philosophy of life nor was I seeking to apply her philosophy to my own life. My involvement with her thought was in many ways almost accidental. After discovering transcripts I made of her late husband's tape recorded lectures among his personal papers, transcripts I had given him before he died, Hannah Arendt asked if I would assist her in completing that work, and of course I agreed. I continued in that capacity for the next five years. After her death, and for twenty five years thereafter, I simply went on with my life. It was only decades later, after the Stevenson Library at Bard College put those and related manuscripts on the internet that I became involved with Hannah Arendt again. This perspective however, has limited relevance to many of the issues I am certain interest people here. But it began a chain of events that has led, among other things, to the film that is being presented this afternoon, a film I played a small role in producing.

My subject today will deal with recently completed research undertaken in collaboration with Ursula Ludz, regarding a question Wolfgang Heuer asked me to consider, namely, "Can Hannah Arendt's personal political choices help us to address the problem of acting politically today and in particular acting with respect to the issues raised by the film "Twelve Hours to Midnight"?"<sup>4</sup> Since for Hannah Arendt judgment is the most political of our mental faculties, judgment is always on the other side of action;

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<sup>3</sup> Ursula Ludz, private communication, April 2, 2013. Ms. Ludz is the editor of *Hannah Arendt Martin Heidegger Briefe (1925 – 1975)*, *Hannah Arendt Denktagebuch (1950 – 1973)*, and *Hannah Arendt Joachim Fest, Eichmann war von empörender Dummheit: Gespräche und Briefe* (with Thomas Wild). Author of many scholarly studies, she is presently working on a volume of Hannah Arendt's correspondence with women.

<sup>4</sup> Twelve Hours to Midnight, "What Brazil has to teach us about solving the Global Economic Crisis", 2009, Simone Matthaei, Wolfgang Heuer directors.

therefore any inquiry about political action is always an inquiry about the judgment of the person undertaking that action. Therefore the title, “Can the Political Judgment Hannah Arendt Exercised in her own Life Help Us to Address the Problem of Acting Politically Today”?

Although a truly comprehensive investigation of those personal choices remains to be completed, enough material has been unearthed so that some preliminary judgments can be made and hypotheses formed. It needs to be stressed however, that these are only hypotheses and opinions, nothing more. It is one of the inherent risks in research such as this that some of our suppositions may prove to be false. For that reason, we claim no privileged position - intellectual, moral, or otherwise - with regard to any of them.

It is always dangerous to speculate on how someone long deceased would respond to contemporary events. Surely, as Jerome Kohn has emphasized, no one was more wary of looking at the present through the prism of the past than Hannah Arendt.<sup>5</sup> So the purpose of my remarks concerning “the importance of Hannah Arendt's thought today,” will be to place that topic in proximity to another event: the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the conference at Bard College in October of 2009 addressing that crisis. It was from that conference, and the events leading up to it, that the volume *The Intellectual Origins of the Global Financial Crisis* edited by Roger Berkowitz and Taun Toay emerged, as well as the film. That Hannah Arendt's ideas are indeed relevant to the financial crisis is reflected in the twenty essays by economists, philosophers, political scientists, lawyers, and investment bankers who contributed to the volume.

It is therefore tempting, as Jerome Kohn does with the marvelous image of Hannah Arendt and Karl Marx gazing down on Wall Street from heaven, and concluding, “they did it all to themselves, no revolution required”<sup>5</sup>, to imagine what Hannah Arendt might think about our current predicament, in July of 2013, so similar and yet so different from the events she lived through and wrote about? In particular, I would like to take up a challenge Jerome lays down at the end of his essay, “No Revolution Required”, namely: “today, in our perplexities over what can be done and

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<sup>5</sup> Jerome Kohn, “No Revolution Required”, *The Intellectual Origins of the Global Financial Crisis*, Fordham University Press, New York 2012, pp 25.

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which choices should be made, regarding not only bailouts and bonuses but also joblessness, abject poverty, and homelessness — in short, worldlessness — and in the felt need that our own voices be heard and our own opinions heeded, we might stop to think that our right to be free *from* politics comes at the price of our right to be free *for* politics”<sup>6</sup>. So, what kind of politics *should we* be “free for”, and in particular, can Hannah Arendt’s personal political choices and the judgment implied by them help us to answer that?

Since Hannah Arendt reiterated, time and again, that one can only act politically “in concert”, not by oneself, we should expect that when she acted politically it was always as part of a group<sup>7</sup>. In what follows I am going to briefly discuss three groups Hannah Arendt acted in concert with, involving three different political causes, as well as three anti-war groups. I will also discuss two anti-war groups she was asked to support, but did not. The three political groups she supported were “Jewish Cultural Reconstruction”, “Spanish Refugee Aid”, and “The Committee to Aid Spanish Students”. The three Anti-Vietnam War Groups she supported were “The Resistance”, “The Fellowship of Reconciliation”, and “The Catholic Worker”. The two anti-war groups she was asked to support and did not were “Students for a Democratic Society” (SDS) and the “War Resisters League”, a pacifist organization. I will then briefly describe three legal cases in the United States for which her writings proved to be particularly important, the first two challenging the government’s power to revoke a person’s citizenship rights; the third challenging the government’s power to restrict the Constitutional “Right to Association”. I will then return to the question that motivated this essay. Time of course, does not allow me to give more than the briefest description of all the above, nevertheless the details are not nearly as important as the principles they embody. I have also provided extensive endnotes to guide the reader through the material and also to support and provide justification for many of the arguments.

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<sup>6</sup> Jerome Kohn, “No Revolution Required”, *The Intellectual Origins of the Global Financial Crisis*, Fordham University Press, New York 2012, pp 37.

<sup>7</sup> “One thing, I think, you both missed is: I really believe that you can only act in concert, and I really believe that you can only think by yourself. These are two entirely different – and if you want to call it – “existential” positions. And to believe that there is any direct influence of theory on action insofar as theory is just a thought thing, that is, something thought out – I think that this is really not so and really will never be so”. Comments of Hannah Arendt, [transcript by Ursula Ludz of a tape recording of the “Conference on the Work of Hannah Arendt, York University”, Toronto, Friday, Nov. 24 1972, part of a twelve minute question and answer]. These tape recordings were finally released by the Library of Congress for public hearing last year.

*Jewish Cultural Reconstruction* (JCR): During the forties and fifties, under the direction of Professor Salo Baron, Hannah Arendt served first as Research Director, then Executive Director of JCR, the organization founded by Baron, to document, locate, and retrieve the cultural and religious treasures looted by the Nazis. She helped to raise money, coordinated a global network of scholars including most notably Gershom Scholem, made numerous fact finding trips to Germany, and negotiated on behalf of that organization with the American military government. After her death, Professor Baron wrote a very moving remembrance of her achievement, a transcript of which exists among his private papers at Stanford University:<sup>8</sup>

(Hannah Arendt) rendered a very important service to the Jewish people in connection with the Commission for Jewish Cultural Reconstruction ... (She made) numerous trips to Germany where she was assisted by some of her surviving former friends, officials of the American military government, as well as by several American and Israeli experts --- (she) was able to recover some 1,500,000 books of Hebraica and Judaica, countless ritual and artistic objects, and more than 1,000 scrolls of law. More than one-third of these valuable collections, where previous ownership could not be identified, were distributed among Jewish institutions in Israel, the Western Hemisphere, and Europe ... other treasures, surviving from thousands of Jewish communities and private collections, have benefited the world's greatest libraries including The British Museum, The Library of Congress, Bibliothèque nationale, and other institutions.

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<sup>8</sup> Salo Baron (1885 – 1989) was an American historian who taught at Columbia University from 1930 until his retirement in the early 1960s. Professor Baron's remarks are preserved in several drafts and appear to have been a eulogy, perhaps delivered at Bard College on May 1976 as part of the memorial service for Hannah Arendt, which he attended with his wife Jeannette Baron (1911 – 1985)? She wrote her own remembrance in 1980 "Hannah Arendt: Personal Reflections", published in the journal *Response*, 39, 1980 No 62. A copy of Ms. Baron's manuscript together with drafts of the remarks of her husband was obtained through the Special Collections Department at Stanford University Library which houses Professor Baron's papers. The quoted remarks are from those drafts. The archives for "Jewish Cultural Reconstruction", 1943 – 1950, are housed in the Special Collections Department at The Wiener Library, 29 Russell Square London WC1B 5DP, United Kingdom. An excellent introduction to Hannah Arendt's work for JCR can be found in Natan Sznajder, *Die Rettung der Bücher*, Mittelweg 36, "Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung", February, 2009, pp 61 - 76.

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Professor Baron then went on to note that because of her single handed efforts, JCR was recognized by the Allied governments as a “Trusteeship Corporation” for all stolen Jewish cultural properties, and that it served as a template for many other important Jewish organizations. He notes that although much has been made of her strained relationship with the Jewish community after the publication of her book *Eichmann In Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, they continued to be personal friends, she “remained as a Board member of The Directors of the Conference on Jewish Social Studies” until the end of her life, attended Board meetings, and “carefully read such essays as were submitted for her judgment”. He then concludes by saying: “Even though Hannah Arendt was not an observant Jew, she believed in a superior power, God”, was deeply dedicated to her people, but also “profoundly concerned with the future of mankind, and particularly, of modern democratic civilization.”

*Spanish Refugee Aid (SRA)*: Beginning in the late fifties, first as a member, than as Chairman, Hannah Arendt was instrumental in helping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for SRA, the organization founded in the early 1950’s by Nancy Macdonald, then wife of the writer Dwight Macdonald<sup>9</sup>, to assist the exiled victims of Franco’s dictatorship. SRA was incorporated in 1953 as a social welfare organization to “improve the health and social conditions and alleviate the human suffering and distress”<sup>10</sup> of Spanish refugees living in exile in France. Some 500,000 refugees fled Spain after the revolution of which approximately 350,000 remained in France. In September of 1960, when Hannah Arendt assumed the chairmanship of SRA, replacing Mary McCarthy, she inherited an organization that had been struggling for over seven years. During the next decade she helped to literally transform it, the only conclusion one can draw, after examining the 256 files among Hannah Arendt’s Library of Congress papers, that contain administrative, financial, legal, and other documents encompassing the years 1960 – 1976. Although there is nothing in these archives that would suggest Hannah

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<sup>9</sup> Dwight Macdonald (1906 – 1982) was a noted writer, editor, social critic, and political activist. He was an editor of *Partisan Review* from 1937 to 1943 but quit to start his own rival journal *Politics* from 1944 through 1949 to which Hannah Arendt contributed. As an editor, he helped foster diverse voices such as Lionel Trilling, Mary McCarthy, George Orwell, Bruno Bettelheim, and C. Wright Mills. Nancy Macdonald (1910 – 1996) was married to Dwight Macdonald until the early 1950’s. Credited with politicizing her husband, Nancy Macdonald founded “Spanish Refugee Aid” in 1953.

<sup>10</sup> Figures pertaining to the numbers of Spanish refugees in France are from the historical introduction to “Guide to The Spanish Refugee Aid Records” archived at the Elmer Holmes Bobst Library at NYU, [available online at ([http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/tam\\_326/index.html](http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/tam_326/index.html))].

Arendt viewed fundraising as a form of action, she nonetheless provided valuable assistance to those who did, and her correspondence makes it clear she was quite pleased with the progress the organization made under her tenure. For 1961 - 1962 alone, under Arendt's Chairmanship, the organization raised over \$100,000 in a single year, a goal Hannah Arendt notes, in a May 16, 1962 letter to SRA's donors it had never succeeded in reaching before. \$100,000 does not seem large by today's standards until one realizes that \$100,000 in 2013 dollars amounts to well over three quarters of a million<sup>11</sup>. For 1962 - 1963 they raised \$135,000, a 32 % increase. These donations were used to obtain and distribute food packages, clothing, and provide small stipends for refugees, many of whom were elderly and destitute. In the early 1970s, a sister organization "Spanish Prisoner Aid", was formed to channel assistance directly to political prisoners and their families.<sup>12</sup> But the assistance provided by SRA was not limited to social welfare. Hannah Arendt and Nancy Macdonald used their connections in Washington to encourage the State Department to intervene on behalf of persecuted intellectuals who were sitting in Franco's jails. In one notable instance during her chairmanship, Hannah Arendt was instrumental in helping to engineer the release of the anarchist writer Gabriel Javiscas from a Spanish prison<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> See The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics website ([http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)). \$100,000 in 1960 dollars has the same buying power as \$785,577.70 today.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Macdonald's letter of September 20, 1960 thanking Hannah Arendt for agreeing to become Chairman of Spanish Refugee Aid can be found in the "Series Correspondence File", Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1960 - 1961. One of her first acts as Chairman was to provide a list of 38 names of potential supporters and in a letter to Nancy Macdonald dated November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1960 she promises "I shall try to get as many new addresses as possible" [see LOC "Series Correspondence File", Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1960 - 1961, images 4, 5, 13, and 14]. Arendt also wrote appeals for donations to supporters in Germany and France. All of this effort seems to have paid off. In her end of year letters of May 14, 1962 and May 15, 1964 Hannah Arendt specifically notes the increases in donations, although it's possible that they were on a fiscal rather than calendar year? A preliminary analysis of the accounting records of April 1, 1961 - September 30, 1961, which breaks out money from donations given by contributors as against money raised from "special projects", of the \$40,366.13 available at the end of Sept 30, \$23,547.26 were the result of donations from supporters in the United States, and \$2,095.65 from Europe, or ~ 63% of the total [see LOC "Series Correspondence File", Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1960 - 1961, images 45 and 46 and "Series Correspondence File", Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1962 - 1964, image 2 and letter of May 15, 1964]. Finally SRA was incorporated as a social welfare organization to provide help to "individuals" as Hannah Arendt stresses in several of her letters. Its status would have precluded it from donating money to parties or supporting political organizations. In the early 1970s, when it wanted to directly support political prisoners, "Spanish Prisoner Aid", it had to create a separate organization [see LOC "Series Correspondence File", Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1965 - 1976, images 68, 69].

<sup>13</sup> Gabriel Javiscas, born in Russia but of Spanish decent, was a writer and member of the circle of intellectuals around the anarchist Emma Goldman. He wrote extensively on Spain, especially after Franco came to power. On a fact finding trip in the mid sixties he was arrested by Franco's security police, and charged under Chapter Two of Title II of the Spanish Criminal Code for relations and contacts with

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*Committee to Aid Spanish Students:* During the mid sixties, when Franco began a crackdown on Spanish universities, Hannah Arendt in conjunction with Francis McMahon of Roosevelt University, Claudio Guillén of the University of California, and a number of other academics and refugee intellectuals created a new organization, “The Committee to Aid Spanish Students”, which provided support for students and faculty who were being persecuted and whose political rights were being threatened or denied. Students for example, who participated in political demonstrations were suspended from class and given large fines, while supporting faculty were often arrested, jailed, and subjected to abusive treatment during their detention. Hannah Arendt served as one of five Honorary Sponsors of that organization, and was instrumental in helping to raise money and publicize their cause. The money collected was used to pay fines and provide legal assistance and financial aid<sup>14</sup>.

*Anti War Organizations:* Throughout the late sixties and early seventies Hannah Arendt actively supported many anti Vietnam War organizations. When Dwight Macdonald started a fund raising effort on behalf of “The Resistance”, a group of young men who were protesting the war by returning their draft cards, Arendt contributed both money and moral support<sup>15</sup>. When another organization, “The Fellowship of Reconciliation” held an art auction to raise money for Vietnamese artists and intellectuals who were being forced into exile by the Saigon regime, she donated a first edition of Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* from her own personal library; it fetched

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“subservice elements aiming to overthrow the Spanish regime.” Both Hannah Arendt and Nancy Macdonald asked Arthur Schlesinger Jr., then Special Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson, who had a close relationship with SRA, to have the State Department intervene on Javicas behalf. The State Department apparently did intervene and Javicas was released and returned to the United States shortly thereafter [see Arthur Schlesinger’s letter to Nancy Macdonald dated February 29, 1964 and Gabriel Javicas letter to Hannah Arendt dated March 25, 1964, LOC “Series Correspondence File”, Spanish Refugee Aid, Inc, 1960 – 1961, images 45 and 46 and “Series Correspondence File”, Spanish refugee Aid, Inc, 1962 – 1964, images 57 and 58].

<sup>14</sup> Correspondence pertaining to “The Committee to Aid Spanish Students” can be found in “Series Correspondence File”, “C” miscellaneous, 1954 – 1975, images 9, 10, 19, 20, 35, 36, 37, etc.

<sup>15</sup> See Dwight Macdonald’s October 1968 cover letter to Hannah Arendt with Arendt’s handwritten designation by “Traveler’s Check” of a \$100 donation in the lower left hand corner [“Series Correspondence File”, General Correspondence, 1938 – 1976, Macdonald, Dwight, image 12]. Dorothy Day’s name is on a two page list of people being asked to contribute, as well as Daniel and Phillip Berrigan, two Catholic Priests who later were arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison terms for protesting the conduct of the war. Accompanying the letter was a typed declaration from “The Resistance”, indicating their intention to turn in their draft cards; at that time, a criminal offense.

\$150 according to the auction receipt preserved among her papers<sup>16</sup>. But one of her most courageous and inspiring acts was to speak at “The Catholic Worker” in New York City in March of 1973 in support of Dorothy Day<sup>17</sup>. Over the years, Hannah Arendt donated money to “The Catholic Worker” and as well involved herself in many causes with which Dorothy Day was affiliated. But her decision to speak at St. Joseph’s House in March of 1973 was of considerable symbolic importance. St. Josephs House was after all, not just a focal point of war resistance. It was also a homeless shelter, providing food, clothing, and lodging to large numbers of destitute men, women, and children. As a new biography of Richard Nixon makes abundantly clear, in March of 1973 Nixon appeared unstoppable, and by 1973 Dorothy Day’s organization had endured nearly a decade of harassment and persecution for their anti-war activism<sup>18</sup>. Of all of the groups who were protesting the Vietnam War, Dorothy Day’s was one of the most persistent in their non-violent civil disobedience. Almost from the beginning, priests, nuns, and activists who either belonged to or had been affiliated with The Catholic Worker were arrested, prosecuted, and given prison sentences for their protests, not just because of their opposition to the Vietnam War but also because many Catholic Worker activists were deeply involved in the struggle for social justice in Latin America.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> “The Fellowship of Reconciliation” was an “affiliate” of Dorothy Day’s “Catholic Worker” [see *A Revolution of the Heart, Essay’s on the Catholic Worker*, edited by Patrick G. Coy, Temple University Press, 1988]. The receipt for a 1795 First Edition of Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* is image 6 in LOC, Organizations 1938 – 1976, Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1968 – 1973 that contains as well the letter of solicitation, auction catalog, amount and bill of sale, and letters documenting additional donations of money.

<sup>17</sup> Hannah Arendt’s 1973 talk at the “Catholic Worker” was announced in their newspaper on March 9<sup>th</sup>. At Dorothy Day’s request, her topic was “Revolution”. Although correspondence exists from people who attended Arendt’s talk, a written copy of Arendt’s speech has not yet been located. Correspondence leading up to it can be found in LOC under “Miscellaneous Organization Correspondence”, C-CI, images 18, 19, 20, etc. Hannah Arendt’s donation of Heinrich Bluecher’s clothing after his death is mentioned in the image 18 letter and in Robert Coles *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion*, Radcliffe Biography Series, pp 165. Finally, Hannah Arendt’s 1972 donation of \$1,000 to the “Catholic Worker” is referenced in a letter from Dorothy Day to Hannah Arendt with a hand written note of thanks at the bottom [LOC General, 1938-1976, --- Unidentified Correspondence---1938, 1968-1975, image 12].

<sup>18</sup> In a new biography *Richard Nixon, A Life in Full*, Public Affairs New York, 2007] Conrad Black refers to the time period after Nixon’s November 7<sup>th</sup> 1972 election victory by “one of the greatest pluralities in American history” and early 1973 as “The Pinnacle” [Part IV, Chapter 13, 775 – 845].

<sup>19</sup> A detailed exposition of “Catholic Worker” and affiliated groups activism is described in [Chapter 9 “War Resistance and Property Destruction”, *A Revolution of the Heart*, *Essay’s on the Catholic Worker*, edited by Patrick G. Coy, Temple University Press, 1988], and Chapters 18 and 22 of Howard Zinn’s *Peoples History of the United States*, Harper Collins Publishers, 1980, 1995, 1998, 2003]. “Catholic Worker” protest against nuclear weapons continues to this very day [see front page article “The Nun Who broke into the Nuclear Sanctum”, New York Times, August 10, 2012]. With regards to “Catholic Worker” activism in

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It is important to note however that Hannah Arendt's political judgment is also visible in the causes she chose not to support as well as those she did. Arendt often rejected calls for help even when they came from close friends, and her archives contain many rejected requests. Two examples stand out.

Sometime during the spring of 1968 Dwight Macdonald asked her to support SDS, "Students for a Democratic Society", an activist organization involved in the student protests at Columbia University.<sup>20</sup> Arendt had concerns about their violent tactics and in particular their belief that violence was a legitimate means for achieving social change, a viewpoint with which she was in disagreement. In a May 25, 1968 letter to Macdonald she stated<sup>21</sup> "I received your appeal for SDS. I think that we agree by and large on these issues, and I too think that the occupation of buildings can to a certain extent be justified against the accusation of trespassing by stressing that a university belongs at least as much as to its students as to its trustees. But this doesn't mean that one supports the SDS". She then adds "I have a little experience with some of their spokesmen, and while many of the rebellious students belong to the very best of the student generation, the same cannot be said for the members of SDS." Arendt concludes with "although I do not want to make a general condemnation", in my opinion the members of SDS "are people who it is difficult to take seriously" and while "I too think the establishment may need 'shoving', I don't think SDS does the right kind nor do I believe there wouldn't be any shoving without them."<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, early in 1973 Dwight Macdonald appealed for Hannah Arendt to join the "War Resisters League", a pacifist organization that had been formed in 1923 by

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Latin America, the multimedia archives at Marquette University that houses Dorothy Day's papers contains a number of cassette recorded lectures given at "Catholic Worker" communities by people who were working in Latin America.

<sup>20</sup> SDS developed from the "Student League for Industrial Democracy" (SLID), the youth branch of a socialist educational organization known as the "League for Industrial Democracy" (LID). LID descended from the "Intercollegiate Socialist Society", started in 1905. Early in 1960, SLID decided to change its name into SDS. SDS held its first meeting in 1960 on the University of Michigan campus at Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Alan Haber was elected president. Its political manifesto, known as the Port Huron Statement, was adopted at the organization's first convention in 1962, based on an earlier draft by staff member Tom Hayden. See Wikipedia and Todd Gitlin *The Sixties*, Bantam; Revised edition (July 1, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> See Dwight Macdonald Papers, Yale University Library, MS 730, Series 1, Box 6, Folder 98.

<sup>22</sup> Elisabeth Young Bruehl describes a famous confrontation between Hannah Arendt and Tom Hayden, on December 17, 1967 in New York City where both appeared as panelists at a discussion pertaining to the topic "The Legitimacy of Violence", chaired by Robert Silvers and held at the "New York Review of Books"; Hayden defending violence as a legitimate political tactic, Arendt condemning it. c.f., Elisabeth Young Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, Yale University Press, 2004, p 415 – 417.

men and women who opposed World War I<sup>23</sup>. Writing from Aberdeen Scotland, where she was delivering the Gifford Lectures, Hannah Arendt replied to Macdonald on May 1, 1973 indicating “I hate to say ‘no’ to you, but I feel I cannot join the War Resisters League. I am not a Pacifist, either in the “relative” or “absolute” sense, and I am not sure I would refuse to support any kind of war ... you know of course that I supported the war against Hitler rather enthusiastically.” She goes on to observe “Today, evidently, one could not support any war between the great powers, because of nuclear weapons. The nuclear deterrent is indeed more effective than pacifism could ever be” and concludes “For the time being, war has become the luxury of small nations and only god knows what will happen when they begin to produce nuclear weapons?”<sup>24</sup>

*Legal Cases:* Hannah Arendt often involved herself in legal cases<sup>25</sup> to express herself politically or her work was often cited in such cases. On June 27, 1952 “The Immigration and Nationality Act”, also known as the “McCarran–Walter Act,” was implemented. Passed by Congress over the veto of President Truman, the act governs immigration and citizenship in the United States. Enacted at the height of the Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anti-communist crusade, among its more controversial aspects was a provision to bar any immigrant with communist affiliations or sympathies from entering the United States. It also gave the United States government the right to strip US citizens found to have been communists of their citizenship and deport them<sup>26</sup>. Hannah Arendt’s husband, Heinrich Blücher, a Spartacist and follower of Rosa Luxemburg, had been a member of the KPD (“Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands”) while in Germany but denied it on his immigration application for the United States. Therefore Blücher would have fallen under the acts provisions. That this caused enormous anxiety

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<sup>23</sup> See the website (<http://www.warresisters.org/history>) for the history of “The War Resisters League”.

<sup>24</sup> See Dwight Macdonald Papers, Yale University Library, MS 730, Series 1, Box 6, Folder 98.

<sup>25</sup> There was for example her restitution case against the West German Government which was decided in her favor by the West German Constitutional Court in 1971. Although it was undertaken for personal reasons, the case had important political ramifications for other refugees who then qualified for restitution by virtue of the precedents established. See Elisabeth Young Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, For love of the World*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1982, pp 447, 448.

<sup>26</sup> “The Act allowed the government to deport immigrants or naturalized citizens engaged in subversive activities and also allowed the barring of suspected subversives from entering the country. It was used to bar members and former members and “fellow travelers” of the Communist Party from entry into the United States, even those who had not been associated with the party for decades”, [cited in Wikipedia and Bertram M. Bernard Immigration Law Index, 1952 – 1982, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies]. See also *Anti-Immigration in the United States: An Historical Encyclopedia* edited by Kathleen R Arnold, Greenwood Press, a subsidiary of ABC-CLIO LLC 2011.

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for both of them is well documented.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, in a 1953 essay, “The Ex-Communists”<sup>28</sup> Hannah Arendt denounced the zeal with which this crusade was being prosecuted and together with a network of kindred spirits lobbied hard for the repeal of many of the acts more onerous provisions.<sup>29</sup> That is precisely what happened. In a groundbreaking Supreme Court Case, “Trop vs. Dulles,” (356 U.S. 86, 1958), brought by a native born U.S. citizen stripped of that citizenship, relying partly on arguments Hannah Arendt made in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the Court said that “citizenship is not subject to the general powers of the National Government, and therefore cannot be divested in the exercise of those powers” and that any attempt to do so constituted “cruel and unusual punishment”. But more significantly, Chief Justice Warren, in his majority opinion, noted that denaturalization was tantamount to the termination of a citizens “right to have rights,” a phrase originally coined by Arendt, and he went on to add:

This punishment is offensive to cardinal principles for which the Constitution stands. It subjects the individual to a fate of ever-increasing fear and distress. He knows not what discriminations may be established against him, what proscriptions may be directed against him, and when and for what cause his existence in his native [naturalized] land may be terminated. He may be subject to banishment, a fate universally decried by civilized people. He is stateless, a condition deplored in the international community of democracies.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See Elisabeth Young Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, For Love of the World*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1982, pp 125.

<sup>28</sup> See “Commonweal”, 57/24, March 20, 1953, pp. 595 – 599.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Elisabeth Young Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, For Love of the World*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1982, pp 274, 275, 288, and 289]. See also *Anti-Immigration in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia* edited by Kathleen R Arnold, Greenwood Press, a subsidiary of ABC-CLIO LLC 2011 pp. 44, 45, 46, 135, 240, 301,406, 658, 675, 713 for references to Hannah Arendt’s writings and in particular the importance of two of her works; “Statelessness”, a lecture delivered in 1955, and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

<sup>30</sup> “Albert Trop was a natural born citizen of the United States who, while serving as a private in the United States Army in 1944, deserted from an Army stockade in Casablanca, Morocco. The next day, he willingly surrendered to an Army officer and was taken back to the base, where he was subsequently court-martialed, found guilty, and sentenced to three years at hard labor, forfeiture of pay, and a dishonorable discharge. He continued to live in the United States”. In 1952, Trop applied for a passport and, after discovering his prior conviction for desertion, was stripped by the government of his citizenship. The government based its reasoning on a provision dating from the Civil War in the

It is also significant that five years later, in another Supreme Court Case; Justice Goldberg invoked Hannah Arendt on the subject of “statelessness,” and yet again, in a case involving the political right to association in 1967, Justice Douglas cited arguments Hannah Arendt made in her book “On Revolution” to defend the position that the Constitution protected the right of citizens to associate with people holding unpopular political beliefs<sup>31</sup>.

Now, although the above list of activities is hardly exhaustive, in my opinion what the list contains and does not contain provides a pretty good idea of what Hannah Arendt thought political action could and could not accomplish.

There is, for example, an emphasis on actions devoted to the protection and exercise of political rights and civil rights. There is also emphasis on actions that are directed in support of people who have been subject to abuses of government power, in particular, the war making or national security power, and as well actions devoted to providing legal restitution for those who have been victimized by such abuse. There is emphasis on actions that provide aid in the form of charity for people who have been

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Immigration and Nationality Act of 1940, precursor to the McCarran Walters Act, giving the government the right to strip the citizenship of persons convicted of desertion. Trop filed a lawsuit demanding the reinstatement of his citizenship. His appeal was denied by the lower courts but upheld by the Supreme Court. See Wikipedia and “Trop vs. Dulles”, (356 U.S. 86, 1958), Page 356, U.S. 101, 102. A transcript of the opinion, minus detailed legal case law can be obtained at “Justia.com”, U.S. Supreme Court Center (<http://www.justia.com/>). Some of the arguments in this case, particularly as it pertains to the concept of “statelessness” involve ideas Hannah Arendt elaborated in THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas often included references to Hannah Arendt’s books in his footnotes and it is possible that it was Douglas who alerted the other justices to their importance especially as they pertained to cases involving civil liberties? In The San Francisco Chronicle, January 21, 1962 Douglas wrote an Op Ed in which he predicted Arendt’s ON REVOLUTION “would eventually be considered a classic” (c.f. also Elisabeth Young Bruehl, pp 473). A number of legal scholars as well as philosophers have addressed the impact Hannah Arendt’s ideas had on the “Trop vs. Dulles” and subsequent Supreme Court decision. They include the human rights scholar Daniel Maier-Katkin, STRANGER FROM ABROAD, W.W. Norton and Company, New York London, 2010, pp 206, and Joseph Betz, “The Homeless Hannah Arendt” in G. John Abbarno’s, “The Ethics of Homelessness”, Value Inquiry Book Series 86, 1999, pp. 229, among others.

<sup>31</sup> “Kennedy vs. Mendoza-Martinez, 372 US, 144 at 161 (1963)”, a transcript of which contains the following comments from Justice Goldberg pertaining to the calamity that results from denying someone the ‘right to have rights’: “*The calamity is not the loss of specific rights, then, but the loss of a community willing and able to guarantee any rights whatsoever. . . .*” Arendt, ‘*The Origins of Totalitarianism*’ (1951), 294. *The stateless person may end up shunted from nation to nation, there being no one obligated or willing to receive him, [footnote 15] or, as in cort’s case, may receive the dubious sanctuary of a communist regime lacking the essential liberties precious to american citizenship.*” See also “W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of America v. Clark - 389 U.S. 309 (1967)” argued before the Supreme Court four years later; this case dealing with the Constitutional Right to Association. Justice William O. Douglas’s references to Hannah Arendt’s ON REVOLUTION are in two footnotes at page 389. For an analysis of Justice Douglas’s concurrence see “The Strange Origins Of The Constitutional Right Of Association”, John D. Inazu, Public Law Fellow and Senior Lecturing Fellow, Duke University School of Law, *Tennessee Law Review* [Vol. 77:, pp 528].

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subject to political persecution. As well, there are numerous examples where she rejects appeals for support when they conflict with deeply held beliefs or violate core principles of her own philosophy. Although she wrote about financial crises, and in fact, it can be argued that Book II of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* provides a quite sophisticated road map through what we are experiencing today, her personal political decisions do not at first glance appear to have much do with them? Why?

In trying to understand what Hannah Arendt might think about our current crisis, it is useful to first consider the size and complexity of today's financial institutions. In a way this is a phenomenon with which she would have been quite familiar, because to some extent it is typical of what happens in the late stages of all capitalist booms. Another clue lies in the concentration of assets and deposits among a relatively small number of large "mega banks". Concentration of power, especially when it is backed by government guarantees, were always a red flag for Arendt and it is precisely large interconnected institutions with direct ties to their respective governments that were the signature prints of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century European financial crises she so mercilessly dissected<sup>32</sup>.

Nevertheless, I seriously doubt if anything could have prepared her for the kinds of institutions that exist today. As an example, in 1990 approximately (~) 15,000 federally guaranteed<sup>33</sup> banks existed in the United States. By 2013 that number had dwindled to ~ 7,000 a decrease of ~ 53 %. At the same time, according to Census data, the population of the United States increased by ~ 26 %<sup>34</sup>. So you have less than half the number of banks servicing approximately 26 % more people. One might argue that

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<sup>32</sup> See for example her 1967 preface to "Part II: Imperialism" in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New Edition with Added Prefaces, Harvest Books, Harcourt Inc, New York London et al. "Nothing was so characteristic of politics in the imperialist era than this shift from localized, limited and therefore predictable goals of national interest to the limitless pursuit of power after power that could roam and lay waste to the whole globe with no certain nationally and territorially prescribed purpose and hence no predictable direction." Arendt then goes on to predict the disappearance of strictly private companies operating in foreign lands, to be replaced by entities that are private in name only, subsidized and protected by governments through a combination of foreign aid and transfer credits. "This means the era of so called dollar imperialism, the specifically American pre-World War II imperialism that was politically the least dangerous, is definitely over ... Private investments create many political problems even if they are not protected by the power of the nation ... only very rich countries and very powerful countries can afford to take the huge losses involved in imperialism" (my underlines).

<sup>33</sup> "Federally guaranteed" means FDIC ("Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation" guaranteed); the FDIC being the government agency that guarantees bank deposits.

<sup>34</sup> Go to (<http://www.multpl.com/united-states-population/table>) for a table of online Census Population Data for the years 1990 – 2012.

improved technology has made that possible. The only problem with this argument is the number of branch offices of the surviving banks has soared; something that technological efficiency would preclude. Similarly, according to government statistics, in 1990 the five largest banks controlled ~ 13 % of all domestic deposits and ~ 20 % of all assets<sup>35</sup>. By 2013, the five largest banks controlled over 40 % of all domestic deposits and 61 % of all assets, a concentration of wealth and power that has never existed in our nation's history<sup>36</sup>. Put in perspective, the largest U.S. bank, J.P. Morgan Chase has assets of ~ \$2.36 trillion, a sum larger than the 2012 Gross Domestic Product of Brazil (when measured in \$2.25 trillion U.S. Dollars). This is banking on a scale that has never been seen before. Five banks, "too big to fail" and "too big to manage", backed to the hilt by their Sovereign, with combined assets of 65 % of the Sovereign's entire GDP.

Yet another clue as to how Hannah Arendt might view the present financial crisis is in the peculiar relationships these institutions have with one another and with the federal government. Truly private entities do not invite government intervention, precisely because such intervention entails large scale public scrutiny; nor do they desire bigness, because any executive will tell you that the larger an institution the more difficult it is to navigate and manage. The global megabanks on the other hand, have turned these rules on their head. By virtue of the speed with which they have devoured their competitors, not only do they desire bigness; they positively embrace it. As far as

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<sup>35</sup> See "National Information Center – a repository of financial data and information characteristics collected by the federal Reserve System – Ranking the Fifty Largest Banks by Assets" (<http://www.ffiec.gov/nicpubweb/nicweb/Top50Form.aspx>). See also Federal Reserve Statistical Release, December 31, 2012 "Large Commercial Banks", "Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System", Economic Research and Data (<http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/lbr/current/>), as well as timely updates at the FDIC website (<http://www2.fdic.gov/IDASP/>) pertaining to total assets and total deposits of banks in the FDIC system. As of 3/31/2013 there were ~ 7,000 FDIC banks in the United States holding ~ \$14.5 trillion of total assets and ~\$10.8 trillion of total deposits. The ratios in the body of the text are obtained by taking the data of the five largest banks and dividing it by these totals. For a technical analysis of large bank holding companies, see "A Structural View of U.S. Bank Holding Companies", Dafna Avraham, Patricia Selvaggi, and James Vickery, New York Federal Reserve Board Policy Review, July 2012 and Jonathan Weil's story in Bloomberg, "It's Official (Sort Of): J.P. Morgan is World's Biggest Bank", May 13, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> At the end of 2012 the five largest US banks had assets as a ratio of total assets of 61 %. This was larger than the ration of the deposits of the five largest banking states to total US bank deposits in 1900, during the age of the so called Robber Barons [ see Rand McNally Bankers Directory and list of Attorneys", July 1900, pp 21. The five largest states, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana – all banks- had ~ 57 % of total US deposits].

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government intervention goes, they are not against that either, provided it is the right kind<sup>37</sup>.

A final clue as to how Hannah Arendt might view our predicament lies in the forces of globalization that has pushed capitalism into regions of the world lacking the necessary civic or legal institutions to protect the public. It is not just in the oil spills, the collapsed buildings where workers die needlessly, or in the curtailment of human and political rights by regimes that experience the benefits of globalization without recognizing any of the concomitant responsibilities, that this phenomenon is reflected. As she noted in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the 19<sup>th</sup> century global financial crises were inseparable from 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism and both would not have been possible without a form of world politics that recognized all boundaries and limits as being relative and negotiable.<sup>38</sup> She understood there is something malevolent about economies that are designed or constituted to operate this way.

In a research paper that is the basis of a new book, Michael Pettis, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Professor of Finance at Beijing University's "Guanghua School of Management", and a gifted young economist writes:

As more and more wealth is concentrated into the hands of fewer people, consumption rises more slowly than production, largely because the wealthier a person gets, the smaller the share he consumes out of his income. Notice that because savings is simply total production of goods and

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<sup>37</sup> Some economists are studying various banking systems in order to understand why some countries such as Canada have stable banking infrastructures and others do not? Charles Calomiris, Henry Kaufman Professor of Financial Institutions, Columbia University has written "Canada for example has never had a banking crisis, even during the great depression. The United States on the other had has had sixteen". In a paper "The Political Foundations of Scarce and Unstable Credit, presented at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta 2013 Financial Markets Conference "Maintaining Financial Stability", Atlanta, Georgia April 9, 2013, argues that unlike Canada, "the United States does not have a single bank regulator". Under the United States Constitution, powers not granted to the Federal Government are granted to the states. In Canada, the opposite is the case; powers not granted to the Provinces are granted to the Federal Government. One consequence is in the United States bank regulation is deeply bifurcated among competing regulatory institutions; state, local, and federal. In Canada it is centralized. Professor Calomiris goes on to argue that the lack of a single regulator makes the American banking system more unstable and prone to the forces of crony capitalism and political dysfunction.

<sup>38</sup> See Roger Berkowitz's explication of this exact point in his Preface and Introduction to *The Intellectual Origins of the Global Financial Crisis* and Jerome Kohn and Antonia Grunenberg's essays, "No Revolution Required" and "Judging the Financial Crisis" in the same volume.

services minus total consumption, (this) forces up national savings rates<sup>39</sup>.

In remarks very much in the spirit of Hannah Arendt, Pettis argues developed countries having excess savings often have no choice but to export them, and in so doing, evolve a form of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism. He notes similarities in those countries that suffered the most during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, especially in Europe, the focus of his most recent research. He suggests the relationship Germany, as an exporter of savings, developed with the southern periphery of the Euro zone was analogous, despite differences in currency regimes, to the relationship China forged with parts of the developed world<sup>40</sup>. Finally, he argues these relationships under the wrong set of circumstances can be quite dangerous.

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<sup>39</sup> See Michael Pettis, "Excess German Savings, not Thrift, Caused the European Crisis" at (<http://www.mpettis.com/>). Compare to Hannah Arendt: "Imperialist expansion had been touched off by a curious kind of economic crisis, the overproduction of capital and emergence of 'superfluous' money, the result of which could no longer find productive investment within the national borders", Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Part II: Imperialism, "Power and the Bourgeoisie". Both Arendt and Pettis agree that excess savings is the root source of 19<sup>th</sup> century Imperialism; their description of the problem being almost identical. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where capital markets were not as sophisticated, and money creation was backed by a commodity, gold or silver, global money could only finance investment in underdeveloped countries if the target country was physically occupied, or controlled by an occupier. It is no accident for example, that in 1809 the British East India Company created its own military academy with the expressed purpose of supplying officers to a private army. This is the form of imperialism Arendt so mercilessly dissects in the core pages of her book. Arendt then tries, in Prefaces to later editions, to place this dynamic within a modern context [notable illustrations being the so called "dollar diplomacy" of the twenties and thirties that she indicates was then supplanted by foreign aid and publicly backed private investment]. It is important, at the risk of oversimplification, to make additional observations bearing directly on points both Arendt and Pettis explicate in their own ways that dovetail. [1] Excess savings can be exported in forms other than money. In particular, export as physical production of goods that the deficit country imports and then pays for either with the proceeds from foreign aid or with the proceeds from sales of debt. Control is exercised, not by physical occupation, but by a form of indenture, using direct aid or loans to provide the capital that finances the deficits generated by imports of the exporter's products. [2] With respect to Germany on the one side and Spain, Italy, Greece, on the other, we are talking about Spanish, Greek, and Italian debt that used to finance deficits directly related to imports from Germany where the debt is denominated in Euros which of course Spain, Italy, and Greece do not control. In the Chinese/American relationship - the goods exporting country China, is paid in US \$'s, a currency the Americans control. The proceeds are then reinvested in Treasury Bonds, which are debt obligations of the U.S. Government. If you ask who is ultimately in control the Americans would say "we are" because the debt is denominated in \$ and we control the \$; the Chinese would say "we are" because we are holding the debt and can always sell it and force the Americans to buy it back", But can they? Is this not perhaps a financial form of MAD, "Mutually Assured Destruction", which is how Hannah Arendt might characterize the relationship?

<sup>40</sup> Pettis describes the dynamic thusly "... this is what Hobson and Conant described as the root source of late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Imperialism. In a closed economy there really aren't many other ways to balance savings and investment if structural factors force up the savings rate. But we do not live in closed economies. Most of us live in open economies (although the world itself is a closed economy), so there is actually a fifth way to resolve domestic savings imbalances, and If domestic savings rates are so high that the country cannot invest it all profitably, it can export those savings, which means automatically that it

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In my opinion none of this would have surprised Hannah Arendt. It speaks to the enduring character of her thought. Yet during her life, she rarely wrote about or took stands on economic controversies nor did she advance arguments pro or con over the question of wealth distribution. Beyond noting the appearance of wealth misallocation as a symptom of more serious problems, or voicing skepticism over any attempt to forcibly remedy natural inequalities, on most economic controversies she was silent. It is useful to also ask why? Why did her personal political choices stop just short of the economic and social questions that in any number of ways provided the impetus for her greatest work?

Many philosophers have tried to argue that Hannah Arendt's political thought presupposes a rigid separation between "the political" and "the social", a curious belief for someone who helped to distribute hundreds of thousands of dollars in social welfare aid during her lifetime. After all, "Spanish Refugee Aid" was, by its articles of incorporation and tax status, a social welfare organization. I think the relationship is more subtle than that. Given her personal political choices, and the awareness that often questions to which we seek answers are unknowable, perhaps what she is trying to tell us goes something like this: there will always be disagreements over the proper level of income, the economic theory that best describes, or calibrates the level of equilibrium between the various constituent parts of a modern economy, or the amount of social welfare any one individual or group of individuals is entitled to, but there cannot be any disagreements about the sanctity of citizens political and civil rights or the laws that protect them from abuses by their government. The political philosopher, like the doctor, does not have clairvoyance; he or she can only position themselves exactly at the juncture of where the body or the body politic encounters individuals or that polity's

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imports foreign demand for its excess production. Germans in the 1990s did not always save enough to fund local investment. But this changed in the first years of the last decade. An agreement among labor unions, businesses and the government to restrain wage growth in Germany (which dropped from 3.2 percent in the decade before 2000 to 1.1 percent in the decade after) caused the household income share of GDP to drop and, with it, the household consumption share. Because the relative decline in German household consumption powered a relative decline in overall German consumption, German saving rates automatically rose. Notice that German savings rate did not rise because German households decided that they should prepare for a difficult future in the Euro zone by saving more. German household preferences had almost nothing to do with it. The German savings rate rose because policies aimed at restraining wage growth and generating employment at home reduced household consumption as a share of GDP. As it did so its current account surplus soared, to 7.5 percent of GDP in 2007 moving from a deficit of 1.7 per cent of gross domestic product to a surplus of 7.5 per cent. Meanwhile, offsetting deficits emerged elsewhere in the Euro zone. By 2007, the current account deficit was 15 per cent of GDP in Greece, 10 per cent in Portugal and Spain, and 5 per cent in Ireland".

vital signs. And that juncture, politically speaking, is precisely where the “right to have rights” can be exercised and guaranteed.

Politics may not be able to give us the kind of life we want to live, but if it can't give us a life we can live with, then we have failed in what Jerome Kohn has called the critical task “of making our voices heard and our opinions heeded”. During her life, Hannah Arendt practiced many acts of judgment; legal, political, civic, humanitarian, and even civil disobedience. The present Global Financial Crisis, has - and will continue to - call for all of these. For anyone who doesn't believe that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can change things, I would remind you of how fast the Apartheid regime in South Africa collapsed, once multinational corporations pulled out. In the film “Twelve Hours to Midnight” you will see businesses agreeing to set limits on their behaviors in order to experience the benefits of living in a civil society, and citizens monitoring the public space in order to insure it remains livable and worth living for.

In a Japanese village, after the Tsunami induced nuclear disaster, a couple bought a radiation detector, and invited their neighbors to bring soil samples. There was enormous fear about radiation levels and no one trusted the government. At first only a few people brought samples, then more, and finally bags of soil could be found stacked in piles around their home. What their experiments told them is that official pronouncements about the scale of the disaster were not believable. What the Japanese government failed to do after an investment of billions of Yen, the couple did with a small amount of their savings. It was not that there was no regulator. Rather, the locus of regulation had moved, from a bureaucracy manifestly unable to discharge its responsibilities to a small home<sup>41</sup>.

There are people today, engaged in trying to imagine what really humane financial institutions might look like, and others seeking redress for those harmed by predatory business practices. And there are people engaged in civic action. As the Occupy movement demonstrated, such things can happen. Only time will tell if the 2008 Global Financial Crisis is one of those many examples of booms and busts that has historically afflicted capitalism, or if it portends something entirely different, a

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<sup>41</sup> See report aired August 16, 2011 “5 Months After Meltdown, Fukushima Citizens Still Face Radioactive Risks”, PBS News hour, ([http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/health/july-dec11/japan\\_08-16.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/health/july-dec11/japan_08-16.html)).

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glimpse into “a far darker future” or the start of “a new beginning”. That could be a warning or it could be a gift?

So in that spirit, and with awareness that the public space is far larger than the space of politics, I would like to express gratitude, from those of us who were involved in making the film, to you the Brazilians, for contributing so much to those matters of vital importance the film addresses and for which Hannah Arendt labored so unsparingly over what turned out to be an all too brief life. It is sometimes said one should never fall in love with countries; they will always disappoint you in the end. Nevertheless, it cannot be by accident, that wherever the name of the people of Brazil is heard, it is spoken with a tone of admiration and great hopefulness. Thank you!

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