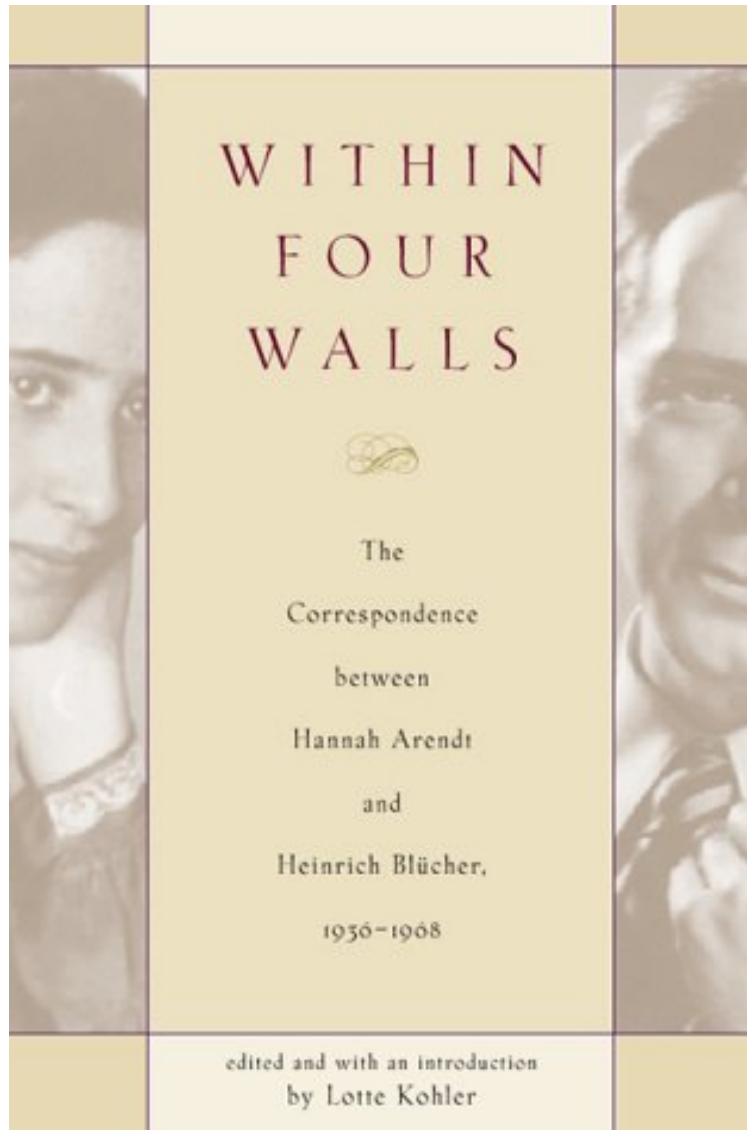


(Ebook pdf) Within Four Walls: The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blucher, 1936-1968

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From Harcourt : Within Four Walls: The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blucher, 1936-1968 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Within Four Walls: The Correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blucher, 1936-1968:

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Intimacy at Its Highest LevelBy CustomerHannah Arendt has had

much of her correspondence published over the last decade or so. We have volumes of her correspondence with Karl Jaspers, Mary McCarthy, Kurt Blumenfeld, and Martin Heidegger, among others. But these letters between Arendt and husband Heinrich Blucher stand out as the finest volume yet published. Whereas in the other volumes we see Arendt as student, friend, confidant, teacher, philosopher, intellectual, in these letters with Blucher we see Arendt as intimate confidant, vulnerable lover, and supportive wife. Heinrich Blucher was the one person to whom she could reveal herself, with whom she dropped her guard. The confidence was mutual as well; in Blucher's letters to Hannah we see his hopes, frustrations, trepidations, and above all, his devoted attachment to her hopes, needs and ambitions. Two people for whom the other was much more than a spouse or lover: someone in whom to take refuge in dark times. The letters begin in 1936, shortly after Arendt and Blucher met in Paris, to which both escaped from Berlin in 1933: she after a short prison term for illegal Zionist activity, and he as a member of the German Communist Party, fleeing via Prague. At the time they met she was 29 and he 37. Both were married, but not to each other. They would not marry until 1940, shortly after their divorces became final. Their first letters set the tone. Interspersed with intellectual and political affairs are their feelings for each other and their doubts and a lasting commitment can be achieved. It grows from there, in all aspects, intellectual and emotional. When Arendt reproaches Blucher for not sticking to their letter-writing schedule, she tells him that she cannot continue to careen like a car wheel that has come off, "without a single connection to home or anything I can rely on." They also discuss mutual friends such as Karl Jaspers, Mary McCarthy, Alfred Kazin, and Martin Heidegger (whose relationship over the years with Arendt can only be described as ambivalent), holding nothing back and giving the reader a rare glimpse into their intellectual and social world, a glimpse one can only imagine in a formal biography of the two. As no one writes letters anymore, this is a most valuable look into an intellectual time and world as distant from our cyber-present as last century's history. Worth your time and money? Yes - in every sense of the word.

Here is the life story of two exceptional people, two Germans who fled their country for different reasons. It is the story of their life in exile in Paris and in New York, their dependence on each other and deepening love, their continued exchange of ideas, Arendt's teaching and writing, her involvement with Jewish life in Europe and in Israel, and Blucher's years at The New School and at Bard College. It is also an important document of the '30s in Germany and France, of World War II, and the post-war life in ravaged European cities. Meanwhile, there is love of food and drink, and of friendship-both intellectual and affectionate-with Karl Jaspers, Mary McCarthy, Alfred Kazin, and the complex relationship with Martin Heidegger and his wife. Within Four Walls is an extraordinary personal and historical record.

From Publishers Weekly In the 1930s Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was a Zionist activist and Heinrich Blucher (1899-1970) was a Communist. Each had escaped Nazi Germany to Paris, where they met, and then moved on together to New York City, where they spent their married life until Blucher's death. Various editions of Arendt's letters are currently available (exchanges with Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Hermann Broch and others), but this very fine collection is special because of Arendt's relaxed and unconstrained relationship with her husband. In these letters one senses that Arendt is most fully herself, for better and for worse, than in her other, more formal or otherwise strained relationships (Heidegger was her lover in the 1920s). She and Blucher speak their minds freely. Their letters contain a few recurring themes that amount to ongoing subplots. One is their gradual and mutual discovery of the United States and its universities, prompting a sense of cultural and intellectual superiority to Americans. Yet while many German exiles longed for return to Germany, Heinrich and Hannah did not; they chose to remain, though Hannah often traveled in Europe because of the fame her writings brought her. Another major subplot in these letters is the conflicted and difficult triangles with Heidegger (her mentor and lover-turned-Nazi) and Karl Jaspers (her dissertation adviser and friend, jealous of Heidegger's greatness and of his relationship to her). Constantine's translations are exceptional, not only accurate but also able to catch the tones and idiomatic nuances of Hannah and Heinrich's private world. Serious students of the history of ideas will be eager for this inside look at an important thinker like Arendt. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. About the Author Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) taught political science and philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York, Brooklyn College, and the University of Chicago. Heinrich Blucher (1899-1970) was born in Berlin. He taught philosophy at Bard College from 1952 to 1967. He also taught at The New School for Social Research. Lotte Kohler was born in 1919 in Rostock, Germany. She has a Ph.D. in German literature, served as a professor of German at the City College of the City University of New York, and is the trustee of the Hannah Arendt Literary Trust.