

PRESS RELEASE

Bertelsmann Commissions Academic Review of Stern Magazine’s History

- **Munich’s renowned Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) will be conducting the independent research**
- **Focus will be on how the magazine has dealt with the National Socialist legacy since it was founded by Henri Nannen**

Gütersloh, August 1, 2022 – Bertelsmann has commissioned the renowned Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History in Munich (*Institut für Zeitgeschichte/IfZ*) to conduct an independent review of the history of “Stern” magazine. The research assignment was initiated by the Bertelsmann Executive Board in agreement and close coordination with the subsidiaries and institutions involved, including the management of RTL Deutschland, the editors-in-chief of “Stern,” and the Henri Nannen School of Journalism.

Thomas Rabe, Chairman and CEO of Bertelsmann, says: “With this analysis of ‘Stern’'s history, we want to enable a contribution to media history in the early days of the Federal Republic of Germany. We are happy to have won the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History as an independent partner in this, and will support it unconditionally in its work.”

The research period will cover the years from Henri Nannen’s establishment of “Stern” in 1948 to Nannen’s retirement in 1983. It will focus on the question of political, personal and content-related entanglements and connections to the National Socialist era. Building on existing research, further analyses will be carried out, e.g. on the topics, texts, and visual language of “Stern.” The magazine’s extensive image archive, which was handed over to the Bavarian State Library for indexing in 2018, will also be included in this process.

By having the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History analyze the history of “Stern,” Bertelsmann seeks to make an objective, scientific, and lasting contribution to the recently rekindled discussion regarding the longtime “Stern” editor-in-chief Henri Nannen (1913-1996). The aim is to provide a factual basis for the public debate, to supplement existing research, and thereby to add a sound analysis to the current state of knowledge on the history of German journalism after 1945.

The project, which is scheduled to run for several years, seeks to establish an open exchange with the research community and transparency in dealing with the expected research results. Among other things, a scientific conference is planned at which an initial stocktaking could be carried out. All sources relevant for the historical research process will be made available to the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History.

The research work will be carried out by the Deputy Director of the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Prof. Dr. Magnus Brechtken, who is a recognized expert in dealing with the legacy of National Socialism. The IfZ has already successfully conducted numerous studies of this kind, e.g. on the history of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Atomic Energy and Research Ministries, the Reichsbank’s development into the Bundesbank, and

Alfred Bauer and the Berlinale, to name just a few of the IfZ's numerous historical reappraisal projects. On Bertelsmann's side, the project will be accompanied by the Corporate Archive, part of the Corporate Communications department.

Background:

The first issue of "Stern" was published on August 1, 1948, by the newly founded Stern-Verlag Henri Nannen. According to recent research, the magazine "Der Stern," which had already been conceived in 1938 under the editorship of Kurt Zentner, served as a model. In 1949/1951, Henri Nannen sold a total of 87.5 percent of the shares in "Stern" to the publisher Gerd Bucerius and 12.5 percent to Richard Gruner, a print shop owner. In 1965, the latter, together with publishers John Jahr Sr. and Gerd Bucerius, founded Gruner + Jahr GmbH & Co. KG, which has published "Stern" since that time. Nannen remained editor-in-chief until 1980, and publisher of the magazine until 1983. Bertelsmann initially acquired 25 percent of Gruner + Jahr in 1969 and increased this stake to 74.9 percent by 1976. In 2014, Bertelsmann acquired the remaining shares and became the sole owner. Since January 1, 2022, Gruner + Jahr has been part of RTL Deutschland.

In 1998, Bertelsmann became one of the first media companies in Germany to commission an Independent Historical Commission (IHC) to research the company's history during the National Socialist era. After more than three years of research, the IHC presented its report "Bertelsmann in the Third Reich," which was published by C. Bertelsmann Verlag in 2002. The IHC's file collection forms the cornerstone of the Bertelsmann Corporate Archive, which was set up in 2003.

For more information, see: Saul Friedländer, Norbert Frei, Trutz Rendtorff, Reinhard Wittmann (eds.): *Bertelsmann im Dritten Reich*, Munich (C. Bertelsmann) 2002.

About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment company RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the magazine publisher Gruner + Jahr, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has around 145,000 employees and generated revenues of €18.7 billion in the 2021 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

Bertelsmann online



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