

PREFACE

"If you look back, you turn your back towards the future." I have heard this presented as an argument against celebrating anniversaries. Physically and literally it may be true that one cannot look in opposite directions at the same time, but for the life of an institution like the Centre for Advanced Study it is both possible and necessary to keep an eye on the past while preparing for the future.

The academic year 1992 - 93 marked the start-up of the activities at the Centre, so we can mark our tenth anniversary in September, 2002. This is the occasion for distributing this booklet.

Ten years is not an impressive age, but it is an occasion to pause and consider what has been achieved so far. In particular, what were the aspirations of those who founded the institution, and have they been met?

The tenth anniversary might be a good time to answer these questions. Our founders are no longer in leadership positions at the Centre and are hence not responsible for what happens today, but they are still alive and active. We have asked some of them to tell about the background and the pre-history of the Centre and to express some views on its development.

The activity at the Centre is organised in research groups. In order to give a sense of what we are doing, we have asked some of the past group leaders to tell about their research. (A complete list of the groups in the past ten and the coming years is given at the end of this booklet.)

International contacts and cooperation are essential aspects of advanced research. Through our research groups we seek to promote this, by bringing to Oslo leading experts within the various fields and promoting their cooperation with Norwegian colleagues.

The concept "centre for advanced study" is an international one. We have a number of sister institutions, and hope to benefit from contact with them. It is a striking fact, however, that many of those have a lot more resources and can offer their fellows much better material conditions than we can. Talent is the most important input for advanced research, but economic and physical resources are also needed. Therefore, we shall continuously strive to improve the financing of the Centre, both from public and private sources.

The Centre's present mode of operation is described elsewhere in this booklet ("How the Norwegian Centre for Advanced Study operates"). At the moment, the Board has no plans for making fundamental changes to this, but we always have a responsibility for evaluating our activities and considering possible changes. This will be done with an eye on the past experience and with the aim of best promoting basic research in Norway in the future.

I thank the contributors to the booklet and wish ourselves all the best for the next ten years and the time thereafter.

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