

PEACE CIRCLE OF THE STUDENTS OF PHILOSOPHY OF HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY

108 Berlin
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Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

We take the liberty of writing to you because of the deep concern we feel about a situation which can become a grave threat to peace.

Neo-fascist developments in the German Federal Republic fill us with anxiety for the fate of mankind, for fascism has already brought immeasurable suffering to the world; the American people, too, were amongst the sufferers.

Never again must a war, which under present conditions might mean the extinction of humanity, be permitted to start from German soil. Only in the German Democratic Republic are conditions such as to guarantee that this cannot happen again, since fascism has been completely wiped out here. What is now going on in the German Federal Republic reveals ominous parallels with what happened in Germany in the years preceding the Second World War.

Regardless of ideological differences, we appeal to you in awareness of the great responsibility for peace which rests upon the peaceable and democratic forces in Germany and in the USA.

After the defeat of fascism in 1945, the victorious Allied Powers and the democratic forces in Germany pledged themselves to destroy fascism and to guarantee a development in Germany which would make it impossible for Germany ever again to be a source of danger to world peace. Now, more than twenty years after these principles were laid down in the Potsdam Agreement, the National Party (NPD) openly and quite legally proclaims nazi principles in West Germany. This is an alarm signal for us. The NPD recently gained 780,000 votes in the Bavarian elections and entered the Bavarian provincial parliament. The same thing happened in Hessen. Who is to guarantee that this neo-nazi party does not end up in the Federal Parliament? We are quite sure that this upsurge of the NPD did not occur over-night.

The reasons for the revival of fascist ideas and of a neo-nazi party care to be sought in the policy of the present government party, the Christian Democratic Union. The German Federal Republic is the only state in Europe which puts forward territorial demands - for example, for a revision of the Oder-Neisse frontier and the return of the former East German territories. It is also doing its utmost to gain control of atom weapons and deliberately stirring up conflict in Germany.

These highly dangerous demands are very clearly expressed in the basic principles of the NPD, which were published in 1965.

Permit us to draw your attention to the following facts:

Both Lübke, the present President of the German Federal Republic, and Kiesinger, the present Chancellor, played an active part in Hitler's fascist state. Lübke was one of the people responsible for building the concentration camps and Kiesinger was a deputy department head in the Radio-Political Department of Ribbentrop's Foreign Ministry.

It is impossible to fight against the evil spirit of nazism in the Federal Republic so long as former nazi officials are in charge of the government there. It is a fact that no obstacles are being placed in the way of the NPD, the party which openly proclaims fascist ideas. Herr Strauss, the new Minister of Finance in Bonn, said that the rise of the NPD was "the answer to those who have tried to drag Germany's name through the mud."

All this is in fact an encouragement of neo-nazism. Our responsibility as students of philosophy compels us to take up a stand against these tendencies. For humanist reasons Professor Jaspers, the West German philosopher, has also entered into political discussion with his book, "Whither the Federal Republic?" Commenting on the survival of national socialist ideas in the Federal Republic, he writes in his book:

"One aspect, and a very important one, is the Federal Army. It has been built up and is now led by officers who served in the Wehrmacht, served Hitler and shared the spirit of that army.

"The position with regard to judges, professors and police is similar. This continued activity of the old National Socialists constitutes a fundamental weakness in the internal structure of the Federal Republic.

"...Once prominent National Socialists have again become active and influential.

"...Ever since (the foundation of the Federal Republic), as its economic power and influence has increased, they have taken an ever more self-confident part in guiding and influencing a state which appears to be on its way to becoming a world power again. A spirit foreign and inimical to the tasks in hand is gnawing at the foundations of what has already been built up, and may destroy it completely if it is not resisted."

On January 2nd Professor Jaspers again spoke over German television on the situation in the Federal Republic. The fact that Kiesinger, an old National Socialist, had become Federal Chancellor was an "affront to other countries" and an "insult" to all Germans "who hated and still hate National Socialism", he said.

Professor Jaspers believes that the main danger from the neo-nazi wave lies in the possibility that the old nationalism preached by the NPD may spread to the other political parties.

We proclaim our sympathy with this point of view, despite our different ideological position. But it is surely not enough to analyse these dangerous tendencies, Is it not far more important to fight against them?

We have tried to put before you briefly here the reasons why we are so deeply concerned about the revival of the evil spirit of fascism in the Federal Republic. We know, of course, that our attitude towards these problems does not always coincide with yours. That is why we should very much like to hear about the attitude of philosophers in the United States, especially their attitude to the following:

What do you think about the revival of fascism in the German Federal Republic and what do you consider to be the causes of it?

What do you think can be done to check these disquieting trends?

We appeal to you to combat the neo-fascist danger in word and deed.

Our Peace Circle of the Students of Philosophy of Humboldt University in Berlin would very much like to know what you propose in this situation.

Yours respectfully,

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