

For a New Academy¹

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MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUE MULLER has taken up the questions here under discussion from a general point of view. Let me now say a few words about the German situation and, more specifically, about that in Berlin. I take it as a duty of the hour to speak in all frankness, although at the risk of having to say things that may not please this or that individual even in Western Germany.

German science is being threatened a second time by totalitarianism. German scientists cannot be spared the reproach that, before National Socialism came to power, they regarded it with too much indifference and unconcern. In wide circles the movement was not taken seriously and, when Hitler seized power on January 30, 1933, many of us still thought that the specter would soon disappear. Only as time went by were our eyes opened. But then it was too late, and the catastrophe took its course. Whoever dared to make a stand against the pseudo-science of the National Socialist race theory and its disastrous race policy was dismissed without his sacrifice winning an iota of success. We had let ourselves be gagged, and bound hand and foot. For the honor of German science, however, it may be stated that the majority of us stood in opposition, even though in silence. Of course, there were also those who, although in their hearts not National Socialists, sold their souls and outwardly, in words and writings, even in their scientific works, rendered repeated obeisance to the despotism. These opportunists have in my opinion always been the saddest figures in the Third Reich.

The Third Reich has been shattered, thanks to the help of a freedom-loving world. Thus there arises a great duty for the German scientist: the duty of being on guard and of not remaining indifferent and unconcerned a second time, when the issue arises of fighting a totalitarian system that recognizes no human rights. But are we German scientists really doing everything we can to fulfill this duty of ours to a world that seeks freedom?

Because of the small amount of space at my disposal I shall confine myself to a subject the discussion of which seems to me particularly urgent: the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin.

In July the East Berlin Academy celebrated its 250th anniversary. The Prussian Academy of Sciences, if it still existed, would have had the right and privilege, as the oldest academy of Germany, to cele-

brate the day on which it was founded by Leibnitz a quarter of a millennium ago. But does this East Berlin Academy of Sciences have the right to regard itself as successor to the Prussian Academy; is it still conducted in the spirit of Leibnitz? I venture to deny it.

In 1948 when, because of the pressure that was brought to bear upon me as director of an Institute of the Academy, I resigned from the institution, the members of the Academy assured me through their representative that they were all on my side in this matter, but neither their president nor the members were able to do anything about it: the decision rested solely with the Communist Administrative Director and his Soviet-German and Soviet-Russian superior authorities. The Academy is just as much under Soviet control as every university in the East Zone. When I expressed regret about this to a member of the Academy, it was felt necessary to reply that orders would not have to be followed in the case of elections for membership, and the name of a man was cited whose election had fallen through because of sharp resistance on the part of the members, in spite of the fact that his election had been called for repeatedly by the Soviet-German and Soviet-Russian authorities. At the next election a few months later, however, this man was taken into the Academy. And is it a sign of independence if, conversely, higher authorities are permitted to eliminate names from the ballot for purely political reasons?

Has anyone ever heard of a solemn protest by the Academy against the rape of science in Soviet Russia and against the kidnaping of internationally known scientists? I shall recall to you here only *one* name, that of Timoféeff-Ressovsky. For many years Timoféeff-Ressovsky, one of the outstanding geneticists of our time, carried on preeminent work at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute in Buch, now an institute of the German Academy, until he was abducted in 1945 by the Russians. Two years later his wife, likewise an internationally known geneticist, was abducted also. Since then we have not learned anything certain about either of them. We suspect that they are lost to science, in a camp in Siberia. Would it not be a lofty task for the Academy to use its good offices with the Soviets in order to regain the Timoféeff's for science? Instead, the Academy, through its president, sends to the world's greatest tyrant and greatest enemy of cultural freedom, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, an epistle which, in my opinion, represents the depth of debasement of a German scientist. This telegram deserves to be read word for word.

On his seventieth birthday the German Academy of

¹ Based on an address delivered at the panel on "Science and Totalitarianism" of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Berlin, Germany, June 27, 1950.

Sciences in Berlin sends its respectful congratulations to that great statesman, of unique authority, the friend of all peace-loving and freedom-loving peoples, the thinker who has penetrated with the clarity of a seer to the deepest fundamentals of historical and social life, and who has become the teacher of his people and of all progressive humanity. May the hoped-for new order of the world and the peace that brings reconciliation of peoples lead to those goals which his power and wisdom have pointed out. May Germany's role in this, following Stalin's word, be that of a guardian of the new world peace, based on that forever sealed friendship with the peoples of the Soviet which has again been confirmed by him.

In the Third Reich, also, telegrams that made us blush with shame were sent by scientists to Hitler. But, to my knowledge, nobody ever reached such a degree of humiliation as in this telegram to Stalin. Moreover, in Hitler's time we were confronted with a tyrant of our own country, whereas here we are dealing with a foreign one. This telegram of the president of the Academy is said to have been sent off without the knowledge of its members. Intramurally it occasioned strong protests. But with these intramural protests the matter rested. I do not know of any member at all who has taken any action in consequence of it.

Recently there has been a flood of new members into the Academy, in which not only the East Zone but also West Berlin and Western Germany have been involved. I have had no information as to whether any scientist in Western Germany has gratefully declined this honor. I only know that one of those newly elected, the editor of a scientific journal in Western Germany, sacrificed a page of his journal in order to announce this honor to his readers in the middle of the page. The election to membership, be it noted, followed weeks after the telegram to Stalin. Political blindness strikes one. One imagines oneself to be work-

ing purely scientifically and does not notice that he has become enmeshed in the Communist propaganda machine, so as now to be working for Communism.

Of course, I am not of the opinion that one should desert the venerable old Prussian Academy of Sciences and let it perish. But the Academy in East Berlin, so long as it is under Soviet domination, can never be a stronghold of free science. Why did the Academy not go into exile long ago? Why has a restorative organization not been set up in Western Germany? Or why, to propose another method, do the Academies in Western Germany not offer sanctuary to those members of the old Prussian Academy who are not stained with Nazism? Complete indolence in these matters is, in any case, impossible and intolerable. The Berlin Academy has not yet found its "Seven of Göttingen" for an act of liberation.

In view of this state of affairs it cannot come as a surprise that the British Royal Society, the Académie Française, and the University of Stockholm, to name only a few, declined to participate in the festivities of the so-called 250th anniversary celebrations of the East Berlin Academy. Perhaps this fact will open the eyes of some of its members.

More courage of their convictions among German professors! That is the demand we make in deep concern for the future of Germany. The Weimar Republic perished because of the indolence of its citizens, because of the tolerance of its intellectuals toward the intolerance of National Socialism. May we German scientists bestir ourselves that the cultural freedom which we in the West have regained, thanks to the help of our Western Allies, will again be shared by the East and will not, through tolerance toward the intolerance of Communism, be lost again even in the West.

(Excerpt from German newspaper of first week in July, to show results already accrued from Nachtsheim's speech. This speech, like his previous actions, was especially courageous in view of the fact that over 4,000 persons who were persona non grata to the Soviet authorities had already been abducted by Soviet agents from the Western Sector of Berlin.—H. J. Muller.)

FURTHER WITHDRAWALS FROM THE EASTERN ACADEMY

PROFESSORS DISSOCIATE THEMSELVES—A CONSEQUENCE OF THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

D. T. Berlin. Four eminent scholars of Berlin have followed the example of Professor Alfred Weber, of Heidelberg, who withdrew from the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Zone shortly after he found out about a telegram which this body had sent to Stalin and had hitherto kept secret. These professors of the Free University, Friedrich Meinecke (modern history), Wolfgang Heubner (dermatology), Walter Lohlein (ophthalmology), and Richard Thrunwald (folklore), have issued an explanation of their withdrawal from

the Eastern Academy, which states the following: "All of us have only accidentally, after several months' delay, learned of the unworthy act of the president of the Academy, in arbitrarily sending off the telegram for Stalin's 70th birthday, without consultation with the Plenum. As this shameful event has now been publicized by Mr. Nachtsheim before the international forum of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, we are concerned lest our membership in the Academy—even though it has for a long time been only a formal one—be widely misconstrued. In order that no one may think that we underrate occurrences and developments which are inconsistent with the spirit of freedom, we are now dissolving even this formal connection."