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Karl Jaspers – Richard Wisser Correspondence 1965–1967

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Abstract: Twenty-three pieces of correspondence between Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) and Richard Wisser (1927–2019) from the time period of 1965–1967 are being presented here in English translation, along with pictorial representations of some of the original letters and also with some explanatory notes. Wisser shares affinities with Jaspers' practice of philosophizing in a spirit of political integrity. Incited by Jaspers, he attempts to initiate a process of clarification, illumination, and self-reflection regarding, for instance, the handling of the atomic bomb. The letters evidence his sympathy with and gratitude to Jaspers as well as his untiring dedication regarding the promotion and advocacy of Jaspers' thought in general and of his political philosophy in particular..

Keywords: Jaspers, Karl; Wisser, Richard; Cusanus, Nicolaus; Aquinas, Thomas; Heidelberg University; philosophical polemics; German politics; atomic bomb; *Hoffnung und Sorge*; politics in Jaspers; practice of philosophizing.

11 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Mainz, December 2, 1965

Esteemed Prof. Jaspers,
at long last I can send to you the detailed appraisal of your Cusanus book, that has now appeared in the journal *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*.¹ Hopefully, it will be somewhat conducive to eliminate prejudices.

I will soon be advertising in *Universitas* your new book *Hoffnung und Sorge*, whose essay "Was ist deutsch?" enthused me in the true sense of the word.² In cordial solidarity I remain with my best wishes
Richard Wisser

¹ Richard Wisser, "Nikolaus Cusanus im 'lebendigen Spiegel' der Philosophie von Karl Jaspers," *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* 19/3 (1965), 528–540.

² *Universitas: Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur*, 21. Jahrgang, 3. Heft, März 1966, pp. 311–12.

12 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, January 5, 1966

Esteemed Professor Jaspers,
heartfelt thanks for your kind lines. I would have liked to have written earlier, as you speak of your concerns with regard to the political developments. However, since I first had to deal with official business that had been left undone for a long time, I am only able to answer today.

Of course, I have not been idle in the meantime. For some years now I am teaching Hegelian philosophy to the attachés at the training center of the Foreign Affairs Office in Bonn. I find it to be the best preparation for their compulsory discussion of Marxism. Having been asked to still address the attachés on the last day of the past working year, I took the opportunity to present to them your basic political ideas. In a sense "in the lion's den"! The fact that this has become possible—I had

already been trying to bring this about – can be seen as a positive sign. That the subsequent, long discussion, during which I tried in your sense to initiate a process of clarification, illumination, and self-reflection regarding the topic, was essentially pertinent and even with those who, not merely out of loyalty and fairness – to say nothing of other motives – but rather represented the obligatory course out of conviction, in the end there was a remarkable attentiveness, I would like to nevertheless point out to you. This is simply also because you talk about your worries in your letter. You point out how the question put to you by the Deutschlandfunk in Cologne triggered a lecture in which you voiced your heartfelt thoughts regarding the topic "What is German?". The idea now occurs to me to offer you an opportunity to place your thoughts within the scope of my possibilities.

[page 2 missing]

13 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, January 11, 1966

Many thanks for your letter of January 5.

I was, of course, very interested in hearing about your discussions with the attachés in Bonn.

Your planned volume *Integritas* promises to be highly interesting.³ You have a list of outstanding authors. I would certainly like to participate. But I cannot make it to prepare a contribution. Today I have sent to Piper a manuscript entitled "Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik" (400 typewritten pages). Now I am tired of politics and I feel the urge to fully return to philosophy. It is as if I were breathing a sigh of relief.

It is a great pity that I have to fail you in this case. There will hardly be a way out. I could send you the proof sheets later so you might eventually pick a little section from them. But that contradicts your enterprise, for my book will probably appear prior to yours. In addition, a mere small excerpt would probably be too misleading, since the political conception is a whole. You wrote to me that you would be reviewing in *Universitas* my volume *Hoffnung und Sorge*. Did nothing come of this? I am all the more looking forward to your comment in the *FAZ*.⁴

Thank you again and good wishes for the new year

³ Dieter Stolte and Richard Wisser, *Integritas: Geistige Wandlung und menschliche Wirklichkeit*, Tübingen, DE: Wunderlich Verlag, 1966.

⁴ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Yours

Karl Jaspers

14 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, January 23, 1966

Dear honored Professor Jaspers, for your kind letter from January 11, I would like to thank you very much today. Starting with the last point of your letter, I have meanwhile again recommended warmly to Dr. Bähr to publish my review in *Universitas* as soon as possible.⁵ The *FAZ* has agreed to print a review. However, it is not yet certain when it will appear. Furthermore, I hope to be able to write in other outlets as well.

Your assessment of our project *Integritas* is very important to me and has given me new impetus. Since Mr. von Weizsäcker has also made available to us a train of thought, namely "The Logic of Madness" (working title), that is extracted from already available publications, I see no reason not to bring an already published discourse that outlines your position. After a thorough study of the bibliography compiled by the diligent Miss Gefken, this or that would be a good choice for it. But I do not know whether these pieces are not included in your new manuscript "Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?"

I would be most pleased if you could agree to the following proposal. I consider your conclusions in the book about *The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man* (dtv edition) pages 129-132, respectively with regard to Mr. von Weizsäcker, also up to page 135 to be the most important part of this book. To my chagrin, I have found that this was more clearly recognized as such in criticism coming from the Eastern Zone, rather than from here, where books are being cited but seldom read in full. I believe that a reprint of this passage represents something very new for many and that the reprint in connection with the conversation with Gabriel Marcel, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, among others, as well as Golo Mann, also yields a not unfavorable retroactive effect with regard to your book about the atom bomb.

Indeed, you kindly offer to send me the proofs of your new book so that I might look for a suitable passage. It is certain that I would like to get to know it soon. It is very likely that it will be difficult, as you say, to extract a suitable train of thought. However, it

⁵ Hans Walter Bähr (1915–1995) had been the editor of the journal *Universitas* for thirty years.

is clear that the part of "The Atomic Bomb" I asked for is self-contained and of convincing clarity and depth of reflection. May I therefore ask your permission to publish this clarification of the problem, which, if I am not very mistaken, Mr. Marcel had not taken into account.

With my best wishes, I send my respects as being yours in constant gratitude

Richard Wisser

15 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, January 25, 1966

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you for your letter of January 23.

I gladly agree with your printing of pages 129-135 (DTV) from my "Atomic Bomb." You would state the source of origin and the year 1958. In my opinion, the situation has seriously changed by now, in that there is a good chance that America and Russia would both not start the nuclear war. The consequence is the proposal that America and Russia might join forces to ban the atomic bomb for all other states. Its implementation seems still possible at this time. In China, the manufacturing facilities could be destroyed without China being able to seriously defend itself against it. I have explained this in brief in my book, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?*, which is now in print.⁶ The question would be whether you would also add a small section from the new book regarding this point.

Cordial greetings

Your

Karl Jaspers

16 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, February 13, 1966

Dear honored Professor Jaspers!

⁶ Karl Jaspers, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik? Tatsachen, Gefahren, Chancen*, München, DE: Piper & Co Verlag, 1966. A part of this book has been published in English: *The Future of Germany*, transl. E. B. Ashton, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967. A literal translation of the original German title would render it, "To Where Drifts the Federal Republic?"

Many thanks for your kind and accommodating letter. We will be happy to print pages 129-135 (DTV) from your "Atomic Bomb." As you briefly explain, since there is an opportunity due to the latest situation that you address in your book *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?*, which is currently being printed, we would very much like to take up your suggestion to include this section. May I ask you to tell me briefly which pages or which point within the structure of your new book you have in mind. Mr. Piper surely will be kind enough to leave this part to us for reprinting.

PROF. KARL JASPERS
4000 BASEL
Austrasse 126

Basel, den 25. Januar 1966

Lieber Herr Doktor Wisser!

Schönen Dank für Ihren Brief vom 23.1.

Ich bin gern einverstanden, dass Sie die Seiten 129–135 (DTV) aus meiner "Atombombe" abdrucken. Sie würden den Ort der Herkunft angeben und das Jahr 1958. Inzwischen hat die Situation sich dadurch m.E. ernstlich gewandelt, dass man die grosse Chance hat, Amerika und Russland würden beide den Atomkrieg nicht beginnen. Die Konsequenz ist der Vorschlag, Amerika und Russland möchten sich verbinden zu dem Verbot der Atombombe für alle andern Staaten. Die Durchführung scheint jetzt noch durchaus möglich. In China könnten die Herstellungsstätten vernichtet werden ohne dass China ernstlich sich wehren könnte. Ich habe dies in Kürze auseinandergesetzt in meinem Buche, das jetzt im Druck ist "Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?" Es wäre die Frage, ob Sie einen kleinen Abschnitt über diesen Punkt aus dem neuen Buche noch hinzu nehmen würden.

Herzliche Grüsse

Ihr

Karl Jaspers

In the meantime, at my renewed request, Dr. Bähr sent the galley proof of my review of your book *Hoffnung und Sorge*, which he had considerably shortened, indeed. Thereupon I forwarded the text in the original version to *Die Welt der Bücher*, in which I have also discussed your "Nikolaus Cusanus" in detail.⁷ The April issue of *Folia Humanistica* contains an extended

⁷ *Die Welt der Bücher: Literarische Beihefte zur Herder-Korrespondenz, Orbis librorum*, Freiburg im Breisgau, DE: Herder Verlag, 1954–1983.

version of my article from the journal for philosophical research "Nikolaus Cusanus in the 'living mirror' of Karl Jaspers' philosophy."⁸ The extension consists primarily in the fact that I draw on those authors in the anthology *Das Cusanus-Jubiläum 1964* (Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft 4) who expressly refer to your book.⁹

With most cordial regards and my best wishes, I remain always your grateful

Richard Wisser

17 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, February 24, 1966

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you for your letter of February 13.

Enclosed I am sending you the section from my forthcoming book which, as agreed, may be suitable to serve as a supplement to the reprint from my book on the atomic bomb. Please decide that yourself. Of course, Piper has to agree too. I do not doubt it that he will. Please refer to me.

The abridgement by Dr. Bähr is not pleasant. Hopefully *Die Welt der Bücher* will print your entire manuscript. Unfortunately, I will not be able to read your extensive review of Nicholas Cusanus in the *Folia Humanistica*, although the journal will be sent to me.

With cordial regards

Your devoted

Karl Jaspers

18 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, March 23, 1966

Dear honored Professor Jaspers, cordial thanks for your friendly letter of February 24. The section from your upcoming book fits well as a supplement to the considerations from the book about the atomic bomb. I have immediately written to Dr. Piper concerning the reprint authorization, but unfortunately, I have not yet received an answer from him. This may be related to his preparations for a publisher congress, on which he gave a talk, as I have gathered it reading the newspaper.

⁸ Richard Wisser, "Nicolás de Cusa ante el 'espejo vivo' de la filosofía de Karl Jaspers," *Folia Humanistica: Ciencias, Artes, Letras* 4/40 (April 1966), 309-336.

⁹ Rudolf Haubst, *Das Cusanus-Jubiläum in Bernkastel-Kues vom 8. bis 12. August 1964: Die wissenschaftlichen Referate*, Mainz, DE: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1964.

Today I can send you the review that has just been published in *Welt der Bücher*. Unfortunately, certain cuts have also been made there. I therefore feel entitled to print an extended version of it in the supplement to the local Federal newspaper (*Der freie Bürger*). I hope this will occur in the course of April.

May I ask you to fill out at your convenience the enclosed sheet of "notes to the person," as these should be printed in the index of the *Integritas* volume.

With cordial regards and my best wishes

always yours

Richard Wisser

19 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, March 26, 1966

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you very much for your beautiful review of my book.

You send me a form for completion. Please do not be angry with me: my weak bodily strength and my constant illness force me to limit my work to the most important tasks. I just simply can no longer do more than that. The answers to the questions posed in the scheme can be found in the writing *Werk und Wirkung* that was published by Piper on occasion of my eightieth birthday.¹⁰ If you do not have it at hand, please let me know and I will send it to you.

With many thanks and cordial regards

Yours

Karl Jaspers

20 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, April 24, 1966

Dear honored Professor Jaspers, I still owe you an answer to your friendly letter from March 26. Of course, I myself will put together the necessary notes regarding your person and your work. I own a copy of Mr. Piper's publication (editing) *Werk und Wirkung* so that I do not have to rely on your friendly offer to send it to me.

Enclosed is an expanded version of my review of your book *Hoffnung und Sorge*.

Since nobody in the "political editorial office" of the *FAZ* did anything to review the book, I myself undertook such a review in the *Literaturblatt*. Now I

¹⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Werk und Wirkung: Zum 80. Geburtstag von Karl Jaspers, 23. Februar 1963*, ed. Klaus Piper, München, DE: Piper & Co Verlag, 1963.

find out that the general interest that was awakened by the pre-print of your new book in *Der Spiegel* had also awakened the "political editorial office." After all, they want to have the new and the "old" book discussed in the "political books" column. Since the reviewer will be Dolf Sternberger,¹¹ there is no reason for me to insist on having it printed in the *Literaturblatt*.

With cordial affinity and constant gratitude

Yours

Richard Wisser

P.S.: Incidentally, at a conference of the Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle für Ost-Fragen in Ingelheim/Rhein,¹²

I presented your position in an evening lecture and subsequent heated discussion on the overall topic "The Problem of Solving the German Question 100 Years Ago and Today."

21 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, April 29, 1966

Unfortunately, the letter was left lying around—my apologies

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you very much for your lines from April 24. Time and again you please me with your active concern regarding the publicity and correct comprehension of my writings. It is very rare that someone gets involved like you do. I think that you will receive my new book from Piper in these days. I am curious to see to what extent you will endorse my views. If one wants to understand the whole, it is not the details that matter, but the principle: The rudder of politics must be thrown around as a whole, everything particular only makes sense in relation to other particulars. What you are telling me regarding the *FAZ* surely interested me. What might Dolf Sternberger, my old friend, possibly write about it. I am a little concerned as to this.

A few days ago, I read one of the

rector's speeches by Funke and thought to myself that you are actually working at the seminar in Mainz.¹³ Do you have any contact with Funke? It seems to me that there is such an extraordinary poverty in the accumulation of familiar clichés, in the mere talk about philosophy without there being one philosophical sentence, that I thought: Should philosophy at the German universities perish in this form? And yet it appears that this is a man of good will and naive sureness. I was quite sad after having read it.

With cordial regards

Yours

Karl Jaspers

PROF. KARL JASPERS
4000 BASEL
Austrasse 125

Basel, den 29. April 1966

*In Brief Brief bei der Lesung -
in der Zeitungs (Stern)*

Lieber Herr Doktor Wisser!

Schönen Dank für Ihre Zeilen vom 24.4. Immer wieder erfreuen Sie mich durch Ihre tätige Sorge um das Bekanntwerden und rechte Auffassen meiner Schriften. Es ist sehr selten, dass sich jemand wie Sie einsetzt. Ich denke, dass Sie in diesen Tagen von Piper mein neues Buch erhalten. Ich bin gespannt, wieweit Sie mitgehen werden. Will man das Ganze verstehen, kommt es nicht auf Einzelheiten an, sondern auf den Grundsatz: das Steuer der Politik muss im Ganzen herumgeworfen werden, alles Einzelne hat nur in Bezug auf anderes Einzelne Sinn. Was Sie mir über die *FAZ* berichten, hat mich natürlich interessiert. Was mag wohl Dolf Sternberger, mein alter Freund, dazu schreiben. Ich bin ein bisschen besorgt.

Dieser Tage las ich eine Rektoratsrede von Funke und dachte mir, dass Sie doch in Mainz am Seminar tätig sind. Ob Sie mit Funke eine Beziehung haben? Die Rede scheint mir von einer so ausserordentlichen Dürftigkeit in der Ansammlung geläufiger Clichés, in dem blossen Reden über Philosophie ohne einen philosophischen Satz, dass ich dachte: soll in dieser Form die Philosophie an den deutschen Universitäten zugrunde gehen? Dabei scheint es sich um einen Mann guten Willens und naiver Sicherheit zu handeln. Ich war nach der Lektüre recht traurig.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen

Ihr

Karl Jaspers

¹¹ Adolf Sternberger (1907–1989).

¹² Founded in 1957, Fridtjof-Nansen-Academy for political education.

¹³ Gerhard Bernhard Otto Funke (1914–2006), co-founder and longtime chair of the Kant Gesellschaft and editor of the *Kant Studien*.

22 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, June 2, 1966

Dear Doctor Wisser!

The following galley proofs were sent to me by Prof. Rainer ... I have read them and agree with the exception of the passage ..

The corrections I certainly do not need to read them. I may assume that you are ... doing that ... written corrections have done them.

With best regards

Yours

Karl Jaspers

23 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, June 15, 1966

Dear Professor Jaspers,

I must begin by apologizing for being able to reply to your two kind letters only today. Of course, I myself will undertake the correction of your contribution for the volume *Integritas*.

In view of Funke's rectorate speech, your considerations correspond to a general impression. I say this very frankly, although this does nevertheless not completely eliminate the reason for your grief, this instance does not need to be taken as particularly symptomatic. Funke—originally a student of Rothacker—has been a Husserlian for years,¹⁴ in a decidedly rationalistic version of it. His, respectively one of his habilitation questions to me at the colloquium had been: If philosophy is not a science, what then is its (I could almost write: Your) claim based on? My counter-question: If philosophy is science, then what else is philosophy?—By and large, Funke probably means well. Humanly speaking: it seems to me that in the rationality principle he comprises a strongly developed affective emotionality, it being a means of asserting the objectivity and reasonableness of one's own ideas.

May I enclose a letter that I have been asked to forward to you. I am also doing this on the grounds of the sender being the same gentleman at whose invitation in 1961 I held a plenary lecture in Berlin on your thesis "On the primacy of freedom over reunification" to an audience of essentially displaced persons. And I am sending you the letter, although it is very long, for which I apologize. But what Mr. Rietz

¹⁴ Erich Rothacker (1888–1965), a leading proponent of philosophical anthropology.



writes is meant in an honest way.

I myself hope to be able to write a review of your "Bundesrepublik" book at the next opportunity. May I add that I have been able to speak about you several times recently, and this with a special affinity, from which I send you cordial regards,

Yours

Richard Wisser

24 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, November 26, 1966

Dear honored Professor Jaspers,

I have not heard from you for quite a long time and I very much hope that you are doing well considering the circumstances. The events in politics keep people that are reasoning in suspense, and I have done my part to present your book as one that brings a liberating breath of fresh air again. The enclosed copy of *Die Welt der Bücher* contains a review that I unfortunately had to shorten considerably. I have therefore tried to add a further consideration elsewhere. In addition, I am planning to publish a report on the reception of your last book in a co-edited book, namely *Politics as Thought and Deed*.¹⁵ The manner in which it is being treated reveals a lot. It is therefore worth making an effort.

I hope that in the meantime you have received our volume *Integritas (Geistige Wandlung und menschliche Wirklichkeit)* and therewith the opportunity to judge this effort. As indicated in my foreword, I was concerned with drawing attention to the problem and the problematic nature of the dual integritas (ontological and ethical), pointing out current phenomena such as

¹⁵ Richard Wisser, *Politik als Gedanke und Tat*, Mainz, DE: von Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1967.

"integration" and similar tendencies of this kind and to raise as a question the philosophically significant aspects of the variants "integral," "integrate," and "integrity." In short: to deepen a contemporary signature from a cultural-philosophical point of view. The fact that the result is the way it is, should not speak against the problem, which, however, should lead, when philosophically deepened, to the practice of philosophizing.

With very cordial regards, I am
with constant gratefulness

Yours

[signature not included]

25 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, November 29, 1966

Dear Doctor Wisser,
thank you very much for everything. I have received your book and am delighted with it. That you dare so expressly to support my writing *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* gives me always ever new satisfaction. I wish you cordially all the best for your many undertakings and for you personally.

Yours

Karl Jaspers

26 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, January 19, 1967

Dear honored Professor Jaspers,
transmitting the enclosed review of your book *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* I take the opportunity to ask for permission, provided that there exists no Spanish translation yet, to include the contribution "Considerations Regarding the Decision Pro or Contra the Use of the Bomb..." in Spanish translation into *Folia Humanistica*.

Mr. Arasa, who would like to include into *Folia Humanistica* a number of essays taken from the volume *Integritas*, asked me to intercede in order to execute his request.¹⁶

I wonder whether you did get my card from Oberammergau at the time? I wrote it directly after your heavily edited television interview. Since we were snowed in for days and a letter shipment that had fallen

into the snow was illegible to me, the same fate might also have affected the outgoing post.

With my best wishes for your well-being, I remain
Your grateful

[signature not included]

27 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, February 20, 1967

Dear honored Professor Jaspers,

On your birthday, on which I cordially wish you all the best, I think with special gratitude of you and the many incitements that your thinking brought to me. On such a day, one pauses and comes to think of many a matter, and finds that a way of thinking that leads beyond mere thought makes more a debtor than taking over mental mintage.

May I revisit once more the request of Mr. Arasa, who would like to publish in Spanish your contribution in *Folia Humanistica* that had been published in *Integritas*. He asks for your approval via me.

With the greatest interest I have read that you have written a replica in response to the critiques of your critics of the book *To Where Drifts the Federal Republic?* Since I would like to publish a contribution under the heading "Karl Jaspers and His Political Critics" in a co-edited volume, *Politik als Gedanke und Tat*—after having carefully collected the reviews thereto, I read through all of them—I would be grateful if you would let me know when its delivery or its galley proofs can be expected.

With my best wishes and in a constant gratitude I am
Yours

Richard Wisser

28 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, March 9, 1967

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you for your very kind congratulations on my 84th birthday.

I wish you cordially all the best for your many undertakings and for you personally.

Of course, I am happy to agree to the publication in *Folia Humanistica*.

Via the publisher I will send you my new book on the politics of the Federal Republic, which will appear at Easter.

With cordial regards and good wishes

Yours

Karl Jaspers

¹⁶ Francisco Arasa Bernaus (1916–1997), founder of *Folia Humanistica* in 1963 and president of the Letamendi-Forns Foundation. Nobel Peace Prize Nominee in 1971 and 1972.

29 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, March 24, 1967

Dear Doctor Wisser!

In a letter dated January 19, you asked me whether the "Considerations Regarding the Decision Pro or Contra the Use of the Bomb..." could be included in *Folia Humanistica* in Spanish translation. If there is still interest in doing so, I would be happy to agree to it.

With best wishes for your work

I remain yours

Karl Jaspers

P.S. I have received your card. Thank you for the friendly regards.

30 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, May 2, 1967

Dear honored Professor Jaspers,

I would like to thank you very warmly for your two friendly letters of March 9 and 24 and for the volume "Answer" that had been announced at the time and has since arrived.

In the meantime, I have not been idle and have written an essay which, on the basis of the reviews of your book on the "Bundesrepublik" that have been

Lieber Herr Wisser,

haben Sie vielen Dank für Ihren Brief vom 2.5. Sie wissen, wie sehr ich mich immer freue, dass Sie sich auch meiner politischen Bücher annehmen, fast als einziger.

Der Einwand, der Ihnen von der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung gemacht wurde, scheint mir komisch. Er besagt doch: Jaspers' Philosophie ist unpolitisch und der Politik feindlich. Daher könnten meine Äusserungen kein Verständnis erwecken in der Form "wie man sie allgemein verstehe". Also sind die Leute zu dumm. Aber das sind sie wohl doch nicht. Eher haben Sie recht, dass man das Missverständnis will.

Mit nochmaligem Dank und herzlichen Grüßen

Ihr

Karl Jaspers

handed to me, investigates the question: Karl Jaspers and his political critics.

Unfortunately, the Federal Agency for Civic Education, which publishes the supplement to the *Parliament* and which showed great interest in the subject matter, informed me that mere considerations through recourse to the philosophical work might indeed arouse understanding, yet Jaspers' stances just would not take it the way it is commonly being understood. Therefore, one would see oneself unable to publish the treatise. The fact that I wanted to undermine widespread misunderstandings and not uncommon misunderstandings seems suspicious.

Well, after I have seen from your "Answer" that I have not interpreted into the air in an unsubstantiated manner, I will not let it bother me and (instead) I will deal with the topic on the occasion of a guest lecture to which the University of Vienna has invited me. The basis of my reasoning is the same as the one that you have used in chapter IX.

With my best wishes for your health and work, I am always yours

Richard Wisser

31 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, May 20, 1967

Dear Doctor Wisser!

Thank you very much for your letter of May 2nd. You know how much I always enjoy that you are also interested in my political books, you are almost the only one who does this.

The objection made to you by the Federal Agency for Civic Education strikes me as being odd. It implies after all: Jaspers' philosophy is apolitical and hostile to politics. Therefore, my political stances could not arouse comprehension in the form "as they are generally being understood." Hence, people are too stupid. But that is not what they are. Rather you are right that

one seeks a misunderstanding.
 Once more, thank you and cordial regards
 Yours
 Karl Jaspers

32 Richard Wisser to Karl Jaspers

Worms, November 9, 1967

Dear honored Professor Jaspers,
 If I only reply today to your friendly letter of May 20, which encouraged me in my work, it is because I would like to combine my thanks to you with the delivery of my book *Verantwortung im Wandel der Zeit*.¹⁷ Precisely because you wrote to me that so few of your political books are being taken on, I have dealt with them in two of its chapters. I would be very happy if I had succeeded in doing justice to your views and at the same time in contributing to somewhat clearing up the intentional misunderstandings by others that distort your views.

In the meantime, I had been invited to a trial lecture in Vienna, where a vacant chair for Philosophy of Politics were to be filled. I spoke about your "Political Philosophy," which is neither politicized nor politicizing philosophy, and I got in the faculty voting the most votes in favor of me and the fewest votes against me. Nevertheless, my name *primo et aequo-loco* was mentioned second in alphabetical order. The minister has now decided to let the first person – although only alphabetically – to be written to first; ostensibly for the

sake of university autonomy. I do not know enough about it, but I do not have a good feeling regarding the matter, especially since the appointed person is said to be neither a philosopher nor a political scientist and he spoke about the EEC.¹⁸

I greet you with cordial sympathy and constant gratitude
 Yours
 Richard Wisser

33 Karl Jaspers to Richard Wisser

Basel, November 24, 1967

Dear Mr. Wisser,
 Thank you very much for your letter from November 9. Finally, you have had a chance! In any case, that is already plenty important, even if there falls a shadow on the matter. Using alphabetical order as the order of factual correspondence does not bode well. I have to lament with you. Let us hope for it as long as it is still possible.

I would especially like to thank you, albeit a little belatedly, for your beautiful book. I was pleased that you went into so much detail about my political thinking. It is not usual for it to be given this kind of attention in professional circles.

With cordial regards and good wishes
 Yours
 Karl Jaspers

¹⁷ Richard Wisser, *Verantwortung im Wandel der Zeit*, Mainz, DE: von Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1967.

¹⁸ European Economic Community.