



Foreword

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Abstract: A celebration of the life and work of Leonard H. Ehrlich and Edith Ehrlich on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America.

In his numerous publications, Dr. Leonard H. Ehrlich repeatedly emphasizes Jaspers' aim, in the *Philosophie*, as one of reorienting the question of Being and truth, on the one hand, and the renewal of the classic question of the unity of Being and truth, in *Von der Wahrheit*, in terms of the human being's historic *actualizations*, on the other hand. The question of truth—as in "the truth," i.e., the question of truth in its unity—as well as the question of all, "special truth," are ultimate philosophical questions for both Jaspers and Ehrlich. The indeterminacy of the question of how we may speak of truth in its unity attests to the difficulty of closing the inevitable gaps between the split of subject-being and object-being. The unity of the wholeness of truth in its coherence never becomes present to a singular consciousness. There is no way for the human being to anticipate in time what may become manifest as true in the future, nor do we know what is yet to be accounted for with respect to human deeds.

To be sure, philosophers ask primal questions, but we never stand near the beginning. Instead, the questions and answers we pose and understand are determined by the historical tradition and present situation within which we find ourselves. The appropriation of tradition proceeds from an intentionality and attentiveness to our own life, even as the pursuit of the unity of truth brings fragmentation of

the truth that is our own into sharper focus. At the end of the day, we apprehend truth from our own source, within historical tradition, and always as singularly unique individuals. If philosophizing is to be genuine, then thinking must arise from our own source. As Ehrlich reminds us, the ideal of a wider universal philosophic communication, even at its systematic and rational best, remains an "ingenuous synthesis" (cf. *Philosophy as Faith*).

The "inner acts" of transcending that Jaspers' philosophy of the Encompassing intends, apply analogously to our understanding of the remarkable life and scholarly achievement of Leonard H. Ehrlich, Edith Ehrlich, and George B. Pepper. Their translations, expositions and interpretations of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers are without parallel in the English speaking world (*Karl Jaspers: Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds, E. Ehrlich, L.H. Ehrlich, G.B. Pepper). Their scholarship echoes the fact that the gaps between Reason and Existenz cannot be closed, that the subject-object split of human consciousness remains suspended by the aporias of *Dasein* and *Existenz*, and that philosophical faith is an ongoing task and challenge of reasonable communication between individuals across diverse cultures, worldviews and historic religious faith traditions. The life and conversations of George B. Pepper testify to the challenges of faith parallel to

Kierkegaard's reminder about the hardness of faith, as well as Nietzsche's sacrifice to the hardness of truth and a fecund nihilism.

The remarkable life and work of Leonard H. and Edith Ehrlich is virtually one with Jaspers' idea of philosophical faith. The idea of philosophical faith, which elaborates both stages of the renewal of the question of Being and truth, is of fundamental political importance today. L.H. Ehrlich stresses that we find no new metaphysical doctrine, religious dogma or creed, but a clear affirmation that philosophical faith may indeed accommodate major religious traditions as forces in the world. Faith is a fundamental phenomenon of the historicity of human beings grounded in actualizing freedom via an encompassing transcendence. As a fundamental phenomenon, faith cuts across, and historically predates, the distinction between philosophy and religion. Faith concerns not so much *what* is believed, i.e., the basic tenets of religious faiths, but rather the question of *how* to believe. Like Jaspers, Ehrlich challenges traditional faiths and their adherents to realize faith philosophically. In faith, we confront the arduous task of communicating with the other in the otherness of his or her unique faith. We gain thereby clarity with respect to self-restriction about what is in fact absolute, but only to oneself.

This volume of *Existenz* celebrates the life and work of Leonard H. Ehrlich, Edith Ehrlich, and George B. Pepper. They teach us still that the daring to know in science, original philosophizing on the grounds of possible Existenz, and the encompassing unity of truth that religion may represent to the authentic self, are worth the existential risks entailed. To speak in terms of ciphers, the realms of World, Self, and God always remain encompassed by the foundering of existence and possible Existenz in time. Truth remains fragmented, yet a force akin to breathing fresh air. Philosophizing, that is, transcending in philosophical thinking and acting, along with the loving struggle for communication, may yet preserve human dignity and the future of humanity. We stand in a global "limit situation" at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Philosophical faith, Ehrlich reminds us, affirms the meaningfulness of life amidst human beings' inhumanity toward other human beings and sentient life on the planet, even in the face of possible perishing.

These scholars challenge us toward a richer communicative openness out of the political faiths that threaten or edify humankind in our present situation. Philosophical faith remains a source of strength against

mankind's baser motives, a wellspring of tolerance (limited only by absolute intolerance), and a self-restriction of finite things, especially, economic power and greedy exploitation, the old *Realpolitik*, and various manifestations of brute force that reveal themselves in contemporary institutional forms. Guidance from the Encompassing must yet prevail, but only if we keep in mind "the slaughter, perpetrated in our own days, in the name of God" (Leonard H. Ehrlich, *Philosophical Faith and the Future of Mankind*).