



PREZES
Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej
Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni
przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu
dr Karol Nawrocki

Warsaw, 28.09.2023

sygn. BIK-08-9/23

Ms.

Bettina Stark-Watzinger

Federal Minister of Education and Research
Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Minister,

It is with great concern that I receive news of the behaviors displayed by the citizens of Germany appearing in the German public space indicating that, despite the fact that 78 years have passed since the Second World War ended, some citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany still have resentment rooted deeply in their consciousness referring to the dark days of the Third Reich characterized by the totalitarian ideology of national socialism.

Over the last several weeks only, the newspapers such as *Bild* and *Die Zeit* have published materials that explicitly prove the behaviors that must trigger a decisive reaction and condemnation in today's world. Performing the Hitler salute, singing Wehrmacht's marching songs, or more and more groups of neo-Nazis being arrested by the German police – these are just a few examples that are being covered by the media, shocking the public all around the world. Let me refer to the report on safety prepared by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution for 2022, which was presented by Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser at the press conference held on 20 June 2023 in Berlin. The data presented indicates that nearly 21 thousand crimes committed by neo-Nazi groups were recorded in 2022. It is a 3.8% increase compared to 2021.

It is worth quoting the results of the social study conducted by the team of scientists of Bielefeld University, supported by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future. The study conducted between September and October 2021 covered 3.5 thousand young Germans aged 16-25. The results are not optimistic. Only 9.4% of the respondents claim that their close ones belonged to

the category of perpetrators of the crimes committed during the Second World War. As regards the question about the period of the national socialism in Germany, less than a half (48.8 percent) answered correctly: 1933-1945. Paradoxically, as much as 70% of the respondents believe that the Germans can be considered by other countries to be a role model with regard to settling history successfully.

The examples referred to above confirm the ineffectiveness of the measures taken by the German state in the field of historical education. In my honest opinion, the sources of such a state of affairs should be sought in an improperly shaped historical policy pursued by Germany after the end of the Second World War. Conscious negligence of subsequent authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to prosecuting the criminals responsible for the death of millions of victims of the crime industry that started to operate on a large scale after Adolf Hitler seized power in 1933; relativizing the liability for starting the Second World War; failing to indicate the nationality of the perpetrators of war atrocities; using the term "Polish concentration camps" allegedly in the geographical context only; and finally, publicly dismissing the claims for reparations for the suffering caused, bring about such effects. For some citizens of the modern Germany, the Third Reich embodies a proud and strong state aspiring to the role of a world leader, not taking into consideration its dark side with a plethora of the crimes committed and the genocidal ideology followed by the NSDAP members.

This disturbing state of affairs should be definitely changed by fighting against the renaissance of behaviors that should be removed from the public space once and for all, constituting nothing more than a historical memento. We owe commemoration to the Victims, and we must condemn the executioners.

As a head of the Institute of National Remembrance, an institution of the Polish State appointed to study, educate, prosecute and holding those responsible for the crimes of totalitarian regimes to account: the German Nazism and the Soviet communism, I would like to offer help in conducting educational measures aimed at the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. Building historical sensitivity based on truth is a difficult and lengthy process. However, it has tangible results in the long term. I do believe that as a result of our common efforts, the Germans, particularly the young ones, will understand that Hitler's totalitarian system built upon hatred and contempt for other people was immense evil. In fact, it led to the death of millions of victims, particularly putting the Jews and my Compatriots – the Poles – through pain.

I am ready to delegate a group of educators and historians from the Institute of National Remembrance to Germany, who will conduct educational workshops and seminars on a large scale to show various facets of the criminal system such as the German Nazism.

The past experience of my associates in conducting historical education based on reliable scientific research guarantees reaching the hearts and consciousness of the German citizens effectively. So that no citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany will ever raise their hand in the disgraceful Hitler salute; so that no one will ever sing the songs of the criminals wearing the uniforms of the Wehrmacht or other military formations; and so that no one will ever create neo-Nazi organizations.

Yours faithfully,

Karol Nawrocki, Ph.D.

President

Institute of National Remembrance