

The CSU Demonstrates for Peace (October 20, 1983)

Abstract

The CSU organized its own peace demonstration in response to protests in many large West German cities. Speaking at the demonstration, CSU chairman Franz Josef Strauß defended the federal government's NATO policies and appealed to the country's silent majority to support them as well.

Source

Peace and Freedom Are Our Mission

It is high time for the silent majority among us to awaken from their sleep, shows their true colors, and take a stand. It is a matter of nothing more and nothing less than maintaining our freedom, preserving peace in the world, and guaranteeing security for the long-suffering people of this century. We know what that means! We know it as the generation that was born during the First World War, experienced the period between the two world wars, and bore the burden and sacrifice and suffering of the Second World War, having only one wish at that time: that future generations of our people could enjoy the happiness of peace, the blessing of freedom, and a normal human life.

I would like to make it very clear: we did not come together here to demonstrate for more arms or more missiles, but to raise our voices publicly for a realistic peace policy. We want peace for Germany; we want peace for Europe, for the entire world. We have learned the lessons of history, and this distinguishes us from others who mean well but are marching down the wrong path. After the Second World War, we translated these lessons into political action.

I allow myself this judgment because today I am still one of the very few frontline politicians who created the foundations of this policy of peace, this policy of freedom, in the late 1940s, who built it up in the 1950s, secured it in the 1960s, and who, in the 1970s, had to experience, with great dismay, the fateful contributions that Willy Brandt, that main culprit, made to destroying all sense of values through his wrong-headed détente policy. We have understood the lesson that history has taught us. So what is that lesson and what did it teach us? I can express it here clearly and openly, without beating around the bush, and without flowery phrases.

Military force must never again become a means of achieving political goals in Europe. For us, war is no longer the continuation of politics by other means^[1], because the introduction of weapons of mass destruction must have eliminated, once and for all, the instrument of war as a political means. Thus, for us, war is not the continuation of politics by other means; rather, war would be the end of all things. There is no place for war in Europe today, and there never shall be one again.

But we also oppose policies that amount to viewing politics as a continuation of war by other means. What does that mean? It means that the policies of the Soviet Union since 1945 have been a permanent war against the freedom of Europe, against the freedom of eastern Europeans, against the freedom of the people in the other part of Germany, and a constant threat to the people in the free part of Europe. The Kremlin has taken the saying by [Carl von] Clausewitz, that war is the continuation of politics by other means, and, according to its law of Marxism-Leninism, has turned it into the formula that politics is the continuation of war by other means.

[...]

The Third World War will not happen. Why not? That is not a flippant statement from a campaign speech filled with promises. It is a firmly grounded, historical, political, as well as moral and religious conviction. The Third World War will not happen. The West will not start a war. That is the great false doctrine of large parts of the peace movement, that they see the danger of war coming from the Americans. They close their eyes to the fact that the Soviet Union has never stopped waging war against the freedom of Europeans. The West is also not provoking any war. In fact, most of the time, the West even goes far beyond the limit of what can reasonably be expected in order to avoid a conflict, even a non-military one. And third, up to now the East has been totally aware of the risk entailed by any military actions against Europe. They are still aware of it today, and they must remain so. That is what this is about!

To express the same thought in another way: Moscow wants to eliminate the pressure toward non-violent policies in Europe. Moscow's policies are violent in Afghanistan; [they are violent] in Africa, through the exportation of revolutionary ideologies and huge masses of weapons, and in the Middle East. Moscow's policies are violent in Central America, in the Far East—Moscow's policies are not violent in Europe, as far as the use of military means is concerned. Moscow has not been able to reach for the sword in Europe. And now hundreds of thousands are [essentially] demonstrating for Moscow to be able to reach for the sword in Europe as well, because [if the peace demonstrators succeed] the risk involved in Moscow's taking that step would be removed! Moscow wants once again to have freedom of movement in Europe for military actions, for threats of military force for the purpose of blackmail, to take away the will of the Europeans.

[...]

We are also committed to pacifism. I commit myself along with my friends to responsible pacifism, which I can explain in two short sentences. As a politician who endeavors to act on the basis of Christian moral law, I would never consider using military force to assert political goals. That is the first short sentence. The second one is: whoever wishes to use force against us to enforce a system not desired by the people should know that he will pay a price that is totally out of proportion with the hoped-for success.

The popularity of the peace movement also makes clear the extent to which illusionary détente policies—since 1969, throughout the 1970s, and up to the change of governments in Bonn—have destroyed people's awareness of the problem. More and more people—extending far into church circles—have been blinded to the historical experience that the desire for peace alone cannot bring about peace. And the desire for peace should not be confused with peace policy. For just as old as man's desire for peace is the abuse of it in the hands of those preparing for war.

[...]

NOTES

[1] Here, he makes reference to the famous quote by the general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831).

Source: Franz Josef Strauß, "Frieden and Freiheit sind unser Auftrag", *Bayern Kurier*, October 20, 1983.

Translation: Allison Brown

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