Father Lorenz Pieper, “The History and Meaning of the Swastika,” July 24, 1923

Source: Protokoll der Ortsgruppe Neuhausen [Meeting Minutes of the Local Group in Neuhausen – a district of Munich], NSDAP Hauptarchiv (Nazi Party Main Archive), Reel 1a, fol. 218 (courtesy of Prof. Derek Hastings, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan)

Text: We find swastikas as early as 3,000 years before the birth of Christ, in the so-called Stone Age, first in Siebenbürgen, engraved on rocks, cliffs, etc. Approximately 1,500 years before the birth of Christ we find them in the City of Troy, then later as well in the Far East in Asia, 100 A.D. we see it in China, 600 A.D. in Japan. Even among the negroes we come upon some isolated examples. Likewise, in the West we see them proliferating, and we observe the swastika as a Christian symbol many thousand times over on the stones used to close up the sepulchers in the catacombs of Rome. We find them often on the armor of knights in the Middle Ages, and even on many clerical vestments for the Mass.

The speaker then went into the meaning of the swastika. The swastika is in and of itself not a pagan symbol. It represents the concept of the complete revolution around the sun, the light that shines and gives life. The sun was holy to the peoples of the North, because it [provided?] them essential light, warmth and life. It was thought of as a god driving a wagon and as a symbol, the wheel was thought of as this wagon, so that in the turning of the wheel there were four [parts?] and these [moved?] in a way that was thought to mean the movement of the sun. The cross on which Christ was crucified was not exactly like the Church’s symbol of today. Christ’s cross was two beams which had the form of a Latin “T.” The similarity of this so-called Christian cross with the swastika and the equivalence of the symbols – both represented light and – Christ even says of himself that he is the light – moved the Christian Church from practical considerations to take up a somewhat altered swastika as the cross of the Christian Church.

The swastika is also a *Volkish* symbol, it does not in that regard represent the sun, but rather is a symbol of the *Volk*, intended to fulfill the *Volk*, with *Volkish* warmth, with national and social will, and with national and social strength. It is intended to be a battle symbol against everything that harms the *Volk* and therefore it is also for us Nazis a holy symbol which should be borne everywhere in honor and love.

These outstanding words were received with well-deserved applause.

Party Member Kilger explained that the swastika was actually detectible much earlier than 3,000 years before Christ. The swastika is not a political battle symbol, but rather a *Volkish* one, under which everyone can work together for the well-being of the entire *Volk*. The adherents of the swastika do not shy away from battle, when they must fight for the salvation of the productive German *Volk.*

Additionally, Party Member Kilger called for a numerous turnout for the evening celebration of the First Company at the Bürgerbràu Beer Hall [in Munich], and for donations for the Neuhausen Section. Pause: The result of the collection taken up at this time: 115,000 Marks. Party member Ostberg explained that it is the duty of every Party Member to bring the swastika into all places where respectful honor can be shown to this symbol.

Party Member Kilger closed this speech evening with a request to a Frieslander named Turner who was present, to convey best regards to the Party Members in Friesland.