

The Antisemitic German Social Party, Bochum Program (June 11, 1889)

Abstract

The Antisemitic German Social Party (1889) was a merger of several antisemitic groups that had spent most of the previous decade fighting among themselves and forming independent leagues, associations, and parties. The new party's "principles and demands" were approved by an antisemitic congress that convened in Bochum on June 10–11, 1889. The congress's 283 delegates approved a program that underscored the heterogeneity of the antisemitic movement at the time: espousing both extreme conservative and quasi-socialist goals, it reflects the diverse viewpoints of such antisemitic participants as Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg (1848–1911) and Theodor Fritsch (1852–1933). Otto Böckel (1859–1923), who had been elected to the Reichstag the previous year, walked out of the congress when his proposed name ("Antisemitic Party") was not accepted, while the Christian Social followers of Court Chaplain Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909) distanced themselves from the program because it framed the Jewish question explicitly in terms of race. German Jews, we read, are to be placed under the Aliens Law and stripped of the right to hold public office; Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe is also to be halted. At the same time, the program concedes that Social Democratic demands for economic and social equality cannot be dismissed out of hand.

Source

1. We acknowledge the great significance of the Christian worldview [*Weltanschauung*] for the moral development of humanity. We are aware of the interaction between national and religious life, especially in the case of the German people. We acknowledge the Christian church's moral and social calling and therefore would like to see it as free as possible from state influence. We desire complete freedom of worship and conscience. All convictions of conscience, including those of persons outside the religious denominations, have a right to tolerance and state protection, provided they do not infringe upon the law.
2. We demand from all citizens and social associations as well as from the entire state a more moral and ideal view of professions, obligations, and privileges than the view that has spread during the last two decades, in particular, to the great detriment of our people.
3. The Antisemitic German Social Party conforms to the Reich constitution and favors both strong imperial authority and conscientious respect for the rights of the German princes.
4. To safeguard Germany's position of power externally and to protect peaceful development from violent attempts at revolution, we require strong military forces on land and on the seas. We regard our people's army, based on the Germanic principle of universal compulsory military service, as a national educational institution of the first order. Moreover, we do not consider the funds used for it as capital invested unprofitably, provided that the army's necessary equipment and supplies are procured from the domestic market, whereby the millions spent flow back to the working and producing population.
5. As long as the restructuring of our population into occupational groups has not been carried out, we view the universal, direct, secret suffrage used for Reichstag elections as the best one, relatively speaking. Therefore we deem it necessary to preserve this suffrage in order to prevent the conscience of the propertied and educated classes from falling into slumber—something that could easily happen if

each new election did not provide an opportunity to express clearly the dissatisfaction or the desires of broad strata of the population. With respect to class-based electoral systems, even a secret ballot would be regarded as an improvement. In order to safeguard a free voting process, which all too often is circumvented by political party leaders through unscrupulous activities and tricks that are difficult to punish under the criminal code, we call for the introduction of officially supplied ballot envelopes. We consider the granting of modest per diem payments to members of the Reichstag a necessary supplement to electoral freedom.

6. Besides freedom of election, we regard freedom of speech, of print, and of assembly to be necessary prerequisites for the sound development of social relations. Adherence to such liberties, however, does not exclude preparedness to help eliminate, by means of legislation, any endeavors in the press and in public life aimed at poisoning people's minds and endangering the state.

7. The Antisemitic German Social Party puts the Jewish question at the forefront of its efforts. It views the Jewish question not only as an issue of race and religion, but also as a problem with international, national, social-political, and moral-religious dimensions. —Even in a state ordered according to German-Social principles, Jewry, whose history of several thousand years proves the impossibility of its assimilation into other nations, would be a thorn in our side and would gnaw at and degenerate our people by way of its evil inclinations and influences; it would completely undermine our laws. Consequently, the Antisemitic German Social Party sees it as its duty to use legal means to combat the anti-national and seditious influence of international Jewry in all spheres of public, social, and economic life, to educate the German people about the Jewish question, and to urge the government to conclude international agreements aimed particularly against the highly dangerous accumulation of Jewish capital.

In order to shed light on the question of whether the religious doctrines to which Jews adhere contain any precepts dangerous to the state, the state should install an academic investigative authority as soon as possible to translate the Talmud and the religious, ritual, and moral regulations set down in rabbinical literature. A new social order on the basis of occupational classes should enable these classes to resist any morally unfit elements, particularly to keep themselves free of any penetration by Jewry, through the use of tribunals and the independent right to determine admission.

The Antisemitic German Social Party has as its goal the reversal of Jewish emancipation and the subjection of Jews to the Aliens Law in Germany. Implementation of this measure would ultimately have the following effect on the Jews: Jews living in Germany may not become judges, teachers, government administrators or technicians, or lawyers or physicians in government positions. Jews have no right to vote, nor may they stand for election at the state or local level. Jews may only be sworn in as court witnesses according to the strict ritual Jewish oath before a rabbi. Jews may not sit as jurors or lay assessors or hold other German honorary posts. The Jews are excluded from service in the German army, instead of which they pay a poll tax to be collected by the respective Jewish community. The Jews will be protected by the state in the practice of their religion and religious customs, as far as these do not cause public nuisance or violate the law of the land, as, for instance, through cruelty to animals in the form of kosher butchering. The Jews continue to be allowed to pursue any industrial occupations, artisanal trade, factory work, self-employed agriculture or commerce, with the exception of peddling. Even though these sweeping measures must be our long-term objective, the following preliminary regulations must also be gratefully accepted as necessary: the expulsion of non-naturalized Jews, a ban on Jewish immigration from the East, and restrictions on Jews seeking admission to official positions, etc.

8. The Antisemitic German Social Party does not, however, limit its program merely to the struggle against Jewry; rather, it wishes to collaborate creatively in the reorganization of our nation and state in economic and intellectual fields. The focus of the "social question" is the conflict between power *over* property and dependence *upon* property, or "capital and labor." This conflict has so far been legally

unregulated, persistently misjudged, and fatally ignored. Accordingly, any social reform promoting “internal peace” has to be welcomed and supported. We demand restriction of all those liberties that favor parasitic Jewry or do serious harm to the productive German performing honest work.

All practical proposals for eliminating or alleviating this conflict will find our ready support, regardless of where they originate. The dictates of justice and political necessity require that the demands of Social Democracy be examined more impartially than they have been until now. The antisocialist laws have proven relatively ineffective against the spread of Social Democracy, and because we believe that improved legislation offers adequate means to handle any excesses, we favor the abolition of these laws. The political and economic conflict between employers and employees can only be resolved or adequately mediated through a mutually agreed-upon regulation and determination of all employment relationships and employment contracts for workers, and of the minimum compensation, salaries, and wages that employers shall grant and workers shall demand.

9. The following demands deserve the most conscientious examination and execution: a) further extension of health insurance programs and of accident, disability benefit, and old-age pension legislation; state assistance for those unemployed through no fault of their own, for widows and orphans; b) a maximum workday based on the conditions and particular nature of the individual firms; c) restriction of female and child labor; d) the most comprehensive observance of Sunday rest as possible; e) strict monitoring of the factories, the mining industry, and so on; f) state arbitration offices for wage and other disputes.

10. The development of the prevailing economic system has reached a point where that system must be recognized as a public danger—as shown, among other things, by the recent large-scale work stoppages. Consequently, the German Social Party considers it a patriotic duty to push for a modern reordering of occupational relationships. We must seriously consider working under the aegis of, and in tandem with, state authority, in order to convert the commercial joint-stock corporations in the key branches of production into cooperative enterprises; we must also consider nationalizing and gradually paying off mortgages recorded in the land register.

11. Concomitant to this, an organic transformation of our public and private system of law has to take place. German legal principles—respect towards the person for his or her own sake and for the sake of the state’s continued existence—have to replace Roman law, which is concerned with mere titles of tenure. Until that goal is achieved, however, the glaring hardships suffered by broad circles of our population must not continue without remedy.

12. The Antisemitic German Social Party champions the reduction of court costs, especially lawyers’ fees; the elimination of mandatory representation by lawyers; the protection of private persons against insults and abuse by the opposing legal counsel in court; the abolition of mintage privileges for private persons and societies; the nationalization of the joint-stock corporation called the “Reichsbank”; the thorough reform of the stock market; and new regulations regarding mortgages and compulsory auctions.

13. With respect to the question of artisanal trades, the Antisemitic German Social Party advocates abolition or restriction of unbridled freedom of trade and supports the introduction of the obligatory qualification certificate [*Befähigungsnachweis*] for anyone wishing to pursue an artisanal trade as an employer.

14. The merchant class must be protected against unfair competition by means of a revision of bankruptcy law, the restriction of the peddling trade, a ban on discount bazaars and installment transactions, the tightening up of fraud statutes against false advertising, misleading estimates, and the mixing and adulteration of goods. Jewish merchants must not become members of the chambers of commerce.

15. The farming class needs protection by way of a reduction of property taxes, court fees, and stamp taxes for contracts on real estate and changes of title; it needs protection against land speculators (carving up estates) and usurers by means of effective usury laws that specify the maximum admissible interest rate and include an obligation to compensate exploited debtors; and it needs protection, by means of effective stock market legislation, against the fluctuations of grain prices induced by stock-market speculation.

16. Direct purchasing from farmers and businesspeople, eliminating the entire system of middlemen, has to be further developed and extended to all other provisions of goods to the state.

17. The Antisemitic German Social Party is not so shortsighted as to reject all colonial policy as unsuccessful because of a few setbacks; it believes, however, that the acquisition of healthy territories that afford good living conditions for Germans is more important than the establishment of trading outposts and plantations.

18: The Antisemitic German Social Party puts high priority on a principled renunciation of the borrowing system used by state financial administrations, so that Germany will be spared the influence of Jewish big capital on governments, which is already emerging in the most detrimental way in other countries. We demand a progressive income- and inheritance tax on the basis of self-assessment, with severe penalties for those who submit false details about their personal property.

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Translation: Erwin Fink

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