

The “Action Program” of the Socialist Reich Party (SRP) (1949)

Abstract

The defeat of the Hitler dictatorship by the Allies in May 1945 was total. As the massive crimes of the regime became common knowledge, not all West Germans completely abrogated their former ideology and beliefs. But these men and women also knew that in order to get an Allied license to found a political party they had to couch their programmatic ideas in the language of conservatism and nationalism, not of National Socialism. On this revamped basis, the Socialist Reich Party (SRP) began to build up a party organization in those regions of West Germany in which many refugees had been settled and in which the locals had voted for the Nazis in 1933. When the Federal Republic was founded in 1949, Allied licenses were replaced by a constitution that enshrined freedom of opinion as a fundamental right and parties competed in free elections. The SRP gained up to 30 percent in some local electoral districts. However moderately the party program was worded, it did not take long before neo-Nazi ideas were expressed by SRP leaders and voters at rallies or in beer halls. By 1952, the slogans that were hitting the headlines had become so blatantly neo-Nazi that prosecutors decided to ask the Federal Constitutional Court to investigate the SRP's activities with a view to banning it. On October 23, 1952, the Court confirmed that the SRP had violated the Basic Law and banned it. It was the first time that the Republic moved to protect itself against political parties that were suspected of wanting to subvert West Germany's nascent parliamentary democracy. The next political organization to be prosecuted was the Communist Party (KPD), which was banned as pursuing unconstitutional aims by the same Court in August 1956.

Source

The SRP is an association of free Germans who, out of their innermost responsibility, demand the restoration of honor, law and order in Germany. They elevate loyalty to the Reich to their highest voluntary law. Before the history of their people and before its future, they commit themselves to work selflessly with all their strength for the realization of the principles of the community.

The necessary unity of all truly German-minded men and women is not striven for by uniting different tendencies, but by pledging to fight for and commit to a clear program for overcoming Germany's current plight. This must not be based on the outlived basic principles of times past but must be fully in harmony with the new outlook on life that has prevailed in the twentieth century.

1. The SRP wants the unification of all Germans in a unified German Reich.

Only in this way can Germany become viable again in the long run and become a healthy member of the European community of nations and culture. Any attempt to make a German constituent state in the East or West the satellite of a power foreign to the region must be regarded as a deepening of the disastrous division of the Reich and must therefore be rejected.

The German claim to the entirety of the Reich's territory, resulting from history and culture, human and international law, is inalienable. No government has the right to surrender German soil in any way. This principle is to be established constitutionally.

2 The SRP demands the freedom and independence of Germany, both internally and externally.

In the name of law and in the interest of the pacification of Europe, it expects and demands the

restoration of German sovereignty and unity as soon as possible, that is, non-interference by foreign powers in the legislation and administration of the Reich, which it still regards as existing under international law. The withdrawal of the occupying forces and a peace treaty which definitively establishes German obligations and does justice to the honor and vital needs of the German people must not be delayed any longer.

3. The SRP is committed to the idea of a European community and political sovereignty.

The prerequisite for a European order is the liberation of our entire continent to full independence alongside the world powers in the West and East. Any partial union in unilateral alignment with one of the two non-European power blocs means the destruction of Europe.

With reverent respect for all natural orders, a future-proof organization of European coexistence must be based on the possibility and the right of every nation to assert and develop itself according to its nature. Without prior restoration of Germany's complete equality and state sovereignty, there is a danger that this right will be unilaterally restricted and diminished for the German people. Instead of promoting European unification, this would only create an insurmountable obstacle to it.

By upholding the idea of a *Reich*, the SRP supports the demographically and historically grown order of the German people.

A strong, responsible Reich government should ensure the unity of a united German development and political organization. In doing so, it must refrain from centralist overreaching of its powers as much as it must counteract federalist tendencies to disintegrate. The administrative and cultural independence of the states and regions must be guaranteed by the constitution.

The SRP is committed to a liberal structure of the internal life of the state and to the principle of the rule of law.

The idea of personality is to become the basis for election to political bodies, thus eliminating party mismanagement and detoxifying political life. Any attempt to restore political forms that have been overcome by history is rejected.

Freedom of political, ideological and religious conviction and expression, as well as the possibility of public criticism and political opposition, must not only be established by the constitution, but must be guaranteed by the absolute independence of the judiciary. The irremovability of judges and scientific university professors and their ineligibility to be influenced by the ruling political parties and denominations must be guaranteed.

All laws, ordinances and decrees that create special rights contradict the socialist principle of equal duties, equal rights, and equal freedom for all Germans and thus the European legal tradition. They must therefore be repealed, and any damage already done must be eliminated. This applies in particular to denazification, i.e., persecution, harm and ostracism for political activity that does not constitute a violation of the criminal laws.

6. the SRP is committed to a genuine people's socialism of all Germans that has grown out of the spirit of our time.

It understands this to mean primarily the principle of the moral bond and integration of the individual into the community.

Voluntary service to the idea of the Reich as an expression of this socialist community of Germans must be elevated to the highest value of our entire political, economic, and cultural life.

In this sense, for the SRP the commitment to the Reich, its history and its great political figures is connected with the demand for the protection of all those who dutifully stood up for their fatherland and the community of Germans, especially with the demand for the protection of the honor of the German soldier. For this reason, the state must not avoid fulfilling the obligations it has assumed towards all those who are entitled to it, regardless of their clanship, occupation or rank.

The disastrous division of the German people into East and West, North and South Germans, natives and expellees, haves and have-nots, employees and employers, church believers and freethinkers, Catholics and Protestants must be overcome. Instead, the German need imperiously demands a community of will and action of all Germans to increase our creative forces and our performance for the reconstruction and the mastering of the common destiny. The practice of capitalist class struggle and the idea of Marxist class struggle must be opposed, and in their place a new just order of life must be realized, which can only be a socialist one.

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Source of original German text: Ossip K. Flechtheim, ed., *Dokumente zur parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945*, 2. vol. *Programmatik der deutschen Parteien*. Part 1. Berlin, 1963. pp. 489-91.

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