

Guidelines of the German Center Party (1922)

Abstract

The Catholic Center Party, which was part of the “Weimar Coalition” from the beginning, united a cross-section of German Catholics who supported a “non-extreme” political movement. Catholicism and its teachings influenced the party to a great extent; its political program and message were shaped by local priests, bishops, and other religious authorities, as can be seen in these guidelines of 1922. The party advocated full equality for Germans in the international community and called for international legislation that respected the public and private lives of citizens. In addition to its foreign policy goals, the Center Party’s domestic policy goal was to protect society from moral decay through “dirt and trash”. According to the party, “religion and the fatherland should be at the center of education and learning”. It also called for a sober, sexually restrained family life. With the help of religion, the Center presented itself in the election campaign as a “party of all classes”.

Source

Berlin, January 16, 1922

I. Foreign Affairs.

1. Germany’s status in world politics requires a clearly defined and consistent foreign policy. Domestic policy legislation must always consider foreign policy relations.
2. The foremost objective of Germany’s foreign policy is to achieve the full equality of the German people with all the other peoples of the world and to restore the international force of law in state and private life. An important task linked to this objective is the international review of the basis of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, namely, the question of the responsibility for the war.
3. Germany’s economic capabilities are the nonnegotiable limit when it comes to fulfilling the obligations it has accepted in the Peace Treaty of Versailles. We must immediately demand the amendment of all provisions that strangle Germany economically or subject it politically to a foreign political will.
4. The occupied territories must be quickly liberated using all legal means available. [...] German laws must be enforced in the occupied territories. [...] The vital link between East Prussia and the rest of the nation must be preserved.
5. A close spiritual community must be nurtured with the Germans living abroad, particularly with the German minorities living in separate communities within foreign countries. [...]
7. The settlement of the colonial issue as proposed by the Peace Treaty cannot be regarded as final. [...]
8. Germany’s stance on the League of Nations and any other international organization must depend on equal treatment of all states without the dominance of any single group of powers. The principle of equal rights should also apply to the disarmament issue.
9. Germany must support the organic expansion of international law. [...]

II. Political Order and State Administration.

1. A strong coalition of parties must agree on a fixed program of work in order to ensure that German policies are methodical and consistent.

2. State authority and legislation must be made effective through the determined and impartial stance of all responsible parties. Subversive movements must be vigorously combated without consideration for the instigators or their parties. Through the substance and implementation of domestic policy, their foundations must be destroyed. Foreign agitators must be expelled without any show of leniency.

3. Control of the security organs, particularly the Reichswehr, must remain firmly in the hands of the constitutional government. [...]

4. One of the most important pillars of the political order and state administration are competent, motivated civil servants whose livelihoods are secured.

7. In general, the powers of self-administration must be expanded. In particular, the provinces must be given greater autonomy in the area of legislation and administration.

[...]

III. Finances and Taxation.

[...]

6. In the area of taxation, consideration must be given to marital status and, in particular, to the number of children. Undue hardship must be prevented by issuing appropriate regulations. Retirees and recipients of small pensions need to be given extensive tax breaks.

[...]

15. Women's work is an indispensable source of value in economic life, but the organization of female employment should not be based on an economic perspective alone. It must take into account the importance of women and their capabilities for the development of our entire culture. Housewives and mothers must be increasingly liberated from paid employment outside the home, which keeps them from performing their most important duties.

16. The victims of war, disabled veterans and surviving dependents of soldiers deserve special attention in social policy. Pensions are to be set on the basis of general economic conditions and the pension procedure must be simplified and accelerated. Disabled veterans must be granted broad eligibility for therapies and measures designed to preserve their health. They must be integrated into working life in a careful adaptation process that makes use of their remaining ability to work.

17. Unemployment relief must be productively structured and strictly limited to cases of unemployment that occur through no fault of the unemployed worker. The current program must be replaced by an unemployment insurance scheme.

V. National Welfare and Culture.

[...]

3. The settlement of rural areas must be promoted and migration into the cities must be checked. For this purpose, rural areas must be given special consideration in the field of public welfare and the preservation of cultural heritage. To support the settlement and construction of housing in rural areas, these areas must receive an adequate share of the state-approved allowances for the high cost of living.

4. Families and children are the focus of a goal-conscious public welfare system. Families with many children must be given preferential treatment and extensive support. All healthy efforts in the area of child and maternity protection and child and youth welfare must be supported.

[...]

6. Programs to protect and support young people must be further developed in a cooperative effort between the state, churches, local communities and associations. Physical fitness must be promoted. Most importantly, young people must be protected from moral seduction and obscene and degrading pictures in public spaces by strictly applying and supplementing existing laws.

[...]

Source of original German text: "Richtlinien der Deutschen Zentrumspartei (1922)," in *Deutsche Parteiprogramme 1861-1954*, edited by Dr. Wolfgang Treue, *Quellensammlung zur Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 3 (Göttingen, Frankfurt, Berlin: Musterschmidt Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1955), 127–40.

Translation: Adam Blauhut

Recommended Citation: Guidelines of the German Center Party (1922), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:document-4629>> [March 16, 2026].