



German History in Documents and Images

Volume 8. Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961
Proclamation by the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (LDPD) (July 5, 1945)

On July 5, 1945, the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (LDPD) shared its founding manifesto with the public in the Soviet occupation zone. Whereas the KPD, the SPD, and the CDU had already expressed support for nationalization in various forms in their own founding appeals, the Liberals came out explicitly in favor of preserving private property and free market structures in economic life. They were the only party to do so.

After twelve years of tyrannical rule and after almost six years of war, the German people stand before a field of ruins of dreadful proportions. It is now necessary to create completely new conditions for the rebirth of the German people, if we want to lead it out of this historically unprecedented collapse of its physical, intellectual, religious, and moral powers, and if we want to pave the way for its reintegration into the world community,

We recognize the following as our immediate goals, which will take years of hard work to achieve:

1. External and internal liberation of the German people from the last traces of the shame and disgrace of National Socialism. Punishment of all those who committed crimes against the law and against humanity during and before the war; also the punishment of those who bear political responsibility for the tyranny of the National Socialists after 1933.
2. Respect for the dignity of all human beings, regardless of race, class, age, or sex.
3. Safeguarding the most basic needs of the German people, food and clothing, health and recreation, and adequate living accommodations.

Repair and restoration of public transportation services as a necessary precondition for the reestablishment of human community and order.

4. Reorganization of German communal life on a truly democratic basis with the goal of political, social, and cultural justice.

5. Recovery of our external and internal freedom and rejection of all forms of nationalistic arrogance. “No one is solely a citizen of the community to which he belongs. That which is human rises from the national but also transcends it.”

6. Genuine participation in strengthening and consolidating the peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the world and of efforts to include Germany in the family of nations.

Elimination of militarism and promotion of all efforts to eradicate war, with all its misery and distress, from the communal life of the peoples of this earth, so that ethical laws are determined not by the law of might but by the might of law.

7. Creation of a true social ethos.

8. Protection and promotion of all types of work in the crafts, trades, and arts, in commerce, industry, and agriculture, and in the office and the workplace. Trade unions and associations shall not be hindered in their efforts to come together to secure representation.

The preservation of a free, unified German economy, private property, and the free market is the precondition for private initiative and successful economic activity. Placing firms under public control is only justified when the enterprises concerned are suitable and ready for this, and when the overwhelming interest of the common good calls for it. This also applies to agricultural enterprises that are disproportionately large in size.

9. Cultural recovery and revival of the German people. Freedom of speech – both written and oral – in the press and radio.

Intellectual, scientific, and artistic purity are an absolute cultural imperative.

10. Freedom of religion. Respect for and protection of all religious sites is self-evident for us. The state and people have their own laws, which are separate from those of the church and religion.

11. Education of our youth to become adults who, through their personality, their moral upbringing, their professional or occupational skills, and their open-minded attitude toward their people and humanity, are qualified to serve their fatherland and all of humanity.

12. Renewal of the educational system, especially at the university level, so that the talented may advance unhindered, regardless of their social background.

13. The basic foundation of our communal life is the family. To restore and preserve it as such – this is an essential precondition for any German recovery.

14. Simplification of the state bureaucracy, reestablishment of an independent, productive, professional civil service as well as honorary offices.

15. The ordering of communal life is unimaginable without the rule of law. Thus, creation of a state based on the rule of law, in which every individual is protected against violence and injustice.

An independent judiciary is the body called upon to protect the law and to ensure just process.

16. The communal life of our nation requires representative bodies to express the will of the people. We desire a parliament elected on the basis of universal, equal suffrage and by secret ballot.

On the basis of these ideas, we, who come from all strata of Germany's working population, want to work to create a new German people and a new German state.

We recognize, of course, the necessity of cooperating with the other anti-fascist parties.

We are united by our liberal worldview and our belief in democratic government. Whoever shares these beliefs and rejects fascism is welcome to join us.

Source: Aufruf der LDPD vom 5. Juli 1945 [Proclamation by the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany, July 5, 1945], reprinted in Ossip Kurt Flechtheim, *Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [*The Parties of the Federal Republic of Germany*]. Hamburg, 1973, pp. 192-94.

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