

## Manifesto of the Christian-Democratic Union in the British zone (1 March 1946)

**Caption:** On 1 March 1946, the Christian-Democratic Union (CDU) in the British occupation zone issues a manifesto which sets out in detail the appeal made on 26 June 1945 and which will itself be supplemented at a later date.

**Source:** TREUE, Wolfgang. Deutsche Parteiprogramme seit 1861. 4. éd. Zürich, Berlin, Frankfurt: Musterschmidt-Verlag - Göttingen, 1968. 506 S. (Quellensammlung zur Kulturgeschichte; Bd. 3). p. 191-195.

**Copyright:** (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

**URL:**

[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/manifesto\\_of\\_the\\_christian\\_democratic\\_union\\_in\\_the\\_british\\_zone\\_1\\_march\\_1946-en-a240531e-1c21-48a0-a74b-49ce158bcd81.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/manifesto_of_the_christian_democratic_union_in_the_british_zone_1_march_1946-en-a240531e-1c21-48a0-a74b-49ce158bcd81.html)



**Last updated:** 05/07/2016

## Programme of the Christian Democratic Union in the British Zone (Neheim-Hüsten, 1 March 1946)

‘The CDU is determined to build a new, different Germany. The era in which materialism formed the spiritual foundation in Germany and ruled State, economy and culture must be at an end. National Socialism, too, had its roots in this ideology and took its principles to the furthest extreme. We can see exactly what this trend, which began long before the start of this century, brought us: contempt for the law and the worship of power, the denial of human dignity and freedom, the deification of the State and the uninhibited expansion of its territory. The end result has been the devastation and dissolution of the State, the destruction of the economy and the total spiritual and material impoverishment of the people. Things will improve only if the nation’s ideology changes. Moral regeneration is needed if the enormous burdens inflicted upon every German citizen are to be borne and the tensions which they create are to be eased. The Christian ideology must once again take the place of materialism, and the principles of the Christian ethic must take the place of materialistic principles. They must have a determining influence on the rebuilding of the State and the demarcation of its power, on the rights and duties of individuals, on economic and social life, on our culture and on relations between nations. Only the Christian ideology guarantees law, order and moderation, the dignity and freedom of the individual and, hence, a true and genuine democracy, which must not be confined to the State but should form the basis for every aspect of the life of the individual, of our people and of all nations. We regard Christianity’s noble perception of human dignity and the value of every single human being as the foundation and guiding principle of our work in the political, economic and cultural life of our nation.

**(A) On the basis of this testimony and determination, we have formulated the following principles and demands:**

### *I. The individual and the State*

1. The principles of Christian ethics and culture and genuine democracy must inform every area of the life of the State. The dignity and inalienable rights of the individual delineate the boundaries of the power of the State.
2. Right to political and religious freedom.
3. Justice, equal rights and legal certainty for everyone.
4. Recognition of the fundamental importance of the family for the nation and the State.
5. Recognition and protection of women in their work in the home and in the family. Women free to work in professional and public life.
6. The majority has no arbitrary and unlimited rights over the minority. The minority also has rights and duties.

### *II. Economic and social life*

1. The purpose of all economic activity is to meet the needs of the nation.

The economy must help to develop the creative powers of the individual and the community.

2. The basic principle underlying all economic activity is recognition of the individual person.

It is therefore necessary to create welfare legislation requiring workers and employers to work together as equals in management and responsibility.

This will bring about a new social order in the economy and society and a fair distribution of the economic return, and it will vanquish the spirit of the class struggle.

3. Individual freedom in the economic field has close links with freedom in the political field. The organisation and management of the economy must not deprive the individual of his personal freedom. It is, therefore, necessary to strengthen the economic position and freedom of the individual and to prevent economic power from being concentrated in the hands of individuals, companies and private or public organisations which might threaten economic or political freedom.
4. Special protection and support for blue-collar and white-collar workers, farmers, craftsmen and small and medium-sized businesses.
5. The right of employers and employees to form associations in order to pursue their own particular interests will be guaranteed in the Constitution.
6. Securing economic and political freedom for the individual and the nation as a whole requires the recognition of private ownership. Right of ownership deserves the same protection and is subject to the same restrictions as other civil rights. It must give way to higher rights, including those based on ethical principles.
7. The unavoidable issue of the nationalisation of sections of the economy is not practical at present, since the German economy is not free. Economic and political viewpoints, particularly the public good, will be decisive when it is subsequently regulated.
8. Coal is the critical product for Germany's entire national economy. We demand the nationalisation of the coal mines.
9. Work for all who wish to work.
10. Ownership in moderation is an essential anchor for the democratic state. The achievement of a modest level of ownership must be promoted for all those in honest employment.

### *III. Culture*

1. Return to the basic principles of Western Christian culture, which is founded on a noble perception of human dignity and the value of every single human being.
2. Securing participation in cultural assets for the whole nation.
3. Particular attention for schools and education – creation of opportunities for advancement for those with above-average talents.
4. Ideological aspects of teaching to be organised in accordance with the will of those responsible for the children's upbringing: the parents.
5. Protection for the Christian churches and other religious communities. They shall be free to organise their activities. Cooperation between Christian denominations, which shall remain completely independent and retain their own way of life. Cooperation between State and churches.

#### **(B) Main tasks for the first period of rebuilding**

The CDU is prepared to cooperate with all parties which are genuinely prepared to cooperate.

The main tasks for the first period of rebuilding are:

### *I. Rebuilding of the State*

1. National unity must be maintained. Germany must become a democratic and federal state.
2. Purging of National Socialist thinking.
3. Punishment for acts that were offences before 1933 but were not punished under National Socialist rule.
4. Punishment of those responsible for the war; full or partial confiscation of assets, depending on the individual case.
5. Seizure of National Socialist economic profits and war booty.

### *II. Economic restoration*

1. Rescue of production centres and all types of means of production necessary for peaceful work and for sustaining the German nation, taking account of the necessary export capacity.
2. Maintenance of welfare insurance.
3. Fair compensation for war damage, making particular use of the assets of those National Socialists who were in positions of authority and enriched themselves, oppressed others and committed criminal or shameful acts.
4. First and foremost, creation of work in all fields of rebuilding.
5. Rebuilding of ruined towns and villages, avoiding the harmful effects of overcrowding. Procurement of land required for this, where necessary by expropriation.
6. Enable people to acquire a home of their own, including in particular through planned suburban housing development.
7. Creation of farms, particularly for refugees, where this can be done without adversely affecting the overall yield.
8. Welfare and cultural care for refugees.
9. Accelerated integration of all welfare measures for disabled ex-servicemen, involving the ex-servicemen themselves.

### *III. Cultural restoration*

1. A new look for the entire education system, including universities, in the spirit of Western Christianity.
2. Particular care for the generations who were educated entirely or largely under National Socialist rule. Help for those returning from military service to secure a livelihood.
3. Organisation of press, radio and cinema in accordance with the cultural principles described above.
4. Nurturing of scientific research and the arts.

### **(C) Relations with other countries**

Despite the atrocities of National Socialism, the German nation has the right not to be judged solely on this period in its history. For the time being, Germany will be able to pursue only a limited foreign policy. Its goal must be to be involved as an equal partner in peaceful cooperation between peoples in the community of nations. The burdens which losing the war will place upon Germany vis-à-vis other countries must be kept to a tolerable level which Germany can fulfil. Even the defeated have the right to live and work. Dire need and hopelessness are the major obstacles to peaceful development. Even the victor in his position of power has responsibilities to the vanquished under human and divine law.'