
In Memoriam

A Life in Defense of German Republicanism

Germany has lost an extraordinary man in Robert Becker, who passed away on March 10. All his life he was a staunch and uncompromising fighter for freedom, democracy, and human rights. Born in 1916, his political commitment began as a teenager in the turmoil of the Weimar Republic, which, since its founding in 1919, had to defend itself against formidable enemies of the far right as well as the far left. Becker came to political maturity in the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, a mass organization of defenders of the republic which is unfortunately little mentioned today. The group energetically opposed the Nazis' anti-Semitism, and there were many German Jews among its members, making it a particular target for the Nazis.

The experiences of this time, and the consequences for him of the National Socialist seizure of power—he spent years as a soldier and as a Soviet prisoner of war—made Becker determined in his resolution that the Federal Republic, founded in 1949, would under no circumstances fail as its Weimar predecessor had done.

He spoke at hundreds of events all across the Federal Republic to raise political awareness, and worked as a publicist against new Pied Pipers, who sought to draw Germans away from republicanism. His close companion during the 1950s was Franz Hron, a Sudetenland-born republican fighter, who upheld his ideals in the Federal Republic at that time.

Reactivating the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold

Both Becker and Hron were instrumental in the re-establishment of the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold at the end of the turbulent 1960s, with the aim of defending the Federal Republic against the threatened “march through the institutions” by the '68ers. A contribution was also made by Robert Kempner, a German-born prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, whose legal

proceeding in Braunschweig to deport Hitler in the late 1920s as a foreign extremist was unfortunately unsuccessful. Becker wrote an article about Kempner which was published by *Neue Solidarität*, the weekly newspaper of the LaRouche movement in Germany, in 2013 (issue No. 33).

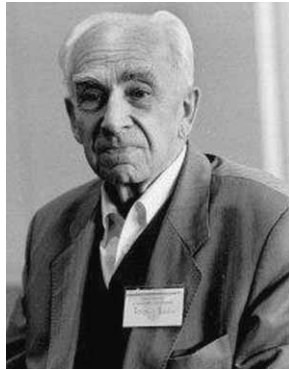
While a member of the reactivated Reichsbanner, Becker also wrote for the re-founded magazine *Illustrierten Republikanischen Zeitschrift (IRZ)* [*Illustrated Republican Journal*], and this was the basis for his contact with the LaRouche movement at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1984, Becker and Hron were present at the creation of the Schiller Institute in Wiesbaden, and Hron headed the German delegation, with the Reichsbanner's black-red-gold flag, at the founding conference of the American Schiller Institute in July of the same year. Becker and Hron were often speakers at events of the Institute in Germany. They joined the Institute in battling the left-green as well as the right-wing varieties of anti-Americanism in

Europe, asserting the opposing concept, that of German-American friendship returning to the original spirit of the young United States and its supporters in Germany such as Friedrich Schiller.

Although unable to make public appearances during the '90s while caring for his sick wife, he wrote articles for *Neue Solidarität*, drawing upon the rich archive of the *IRZ*. After his wife's death, he continued to campaign politically, with personal support from Anna Hron, widow of his longtime friend Franz. Both continued to participate in events of the Schiller Institute, such as the Schiller Festival in Frankfurt in the Fall of 2012, from which Becker is still remembered for his fervent plea for a republican spirit, infused with Classical culture.

The text of his book, *Der Wahrheit die Ehre! Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, die vergessene Judentzschutztruppe der Weimarer Republik* [*Homage to the Truth! The Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold, the Forgotten Jewish Protection Force of the Weimar Republic*] (2000), can be purchased on CD at the *Neue Solidarität* website, <http://www.solidaritaet.com/buecher/politik/>.

By Rainer Apel. Translated from German by Daniel Platt.



Robert Becker
(1916-2014)