

Where the Union Label is Emphasized



Organization of Women Workers in Germany

Submitted by the General Commission of Trade Unions of Germany to the Convention of the American Women's Trade Union League.

Germany has several groups of trade unions, the largest and most important of which are known as the "Free" Trade Unions, and are combined under the "General Commission of General Trade Unions." They embrace 2,600,000 members, including a goodly number of women workers. In fact, they include more women workers than all the other trade unions of Germany combined.

At the end of 1911 the Free Trade Unions number 293,574 organized women workers. These women workers are not organized in special locals or sections, for all German unions accept women workers under the same conditions as males in all those trades where women workers are employed. This is also true of the Domestic Workers' Union, although those engaged in domestic service are mainly females. The rules of this union, too, provide for the membership of domestic servants of both sexes, as is the rule in all other Free Trade Unions.

Female workers in all our Free Trade Unions enjoy the same privileges as men. They consequently sit on all boards or elective bodies of their respective unions. Out of 49 unions existing in Germany, however, there are but two which have a lady president, while the larger number of the members forming the executive of all other unions are men. This fact is not in any way attributable to any rules opposing the appointment of women to governing bodies, but is rather due to the indifference of many women workers, who are not sufficiently interested in the management of affairs of their organizations. This lack of co-operation on the part of the women is, of course, largely due to their position as members of the household, and to the double task that is put upon their shoulders as housewives and wage earners. On the other hand, the male members have never objected to their co-operation, or to full and equal rights being given to the women workers in their trade unions.

Contributions or dues, as well as the benefits prescribed for female workers, are usually somewhat lower than those laid down for men, because their earnings are usually less. Five national unions have, however, adopted equal scales for men and women, thus emphasizing the principle of equality for both sexes. In these instances the amount of contribution varies according to the wages earned. The benefits are graduated in the case of these unions, thus preventing the great risk which accompanies the membership of women, that of becoming a greater burden upon the funds than the men. The success attending the organizing work of the women has shown itself later than in the case of the men, in spite of the combination of the two sexes in one and the same organization. The growth in numbers of the organized women workers as compared with the general growth of the trade union movement will be seen from the table given below. The figures quoted will certainly prove that trade unionism is appealing more and more to women workers and making rapid strides forward in all the different branches of women labor, although the number of organized women workers is not all that could be desired, when compared with the number of organized male workers. The average membership of the Free Trade Unions was as follows in:

Year	Total Membership	Female Members
1892	237,094	4,351
1896	329,230	15,265
1900	680,427	22,844
1905	1,344,893	74,411
1906	1,689,709	118,908
1907	1,856,506	136,929
1908	1,831,731	138,443
1909	1,832,667	135,888
1910	2,017,298	181,512
1911	2,320,986	191,332

The number of women workers organized in these unions before 1892 cannot be ascertained. It has even been impossible to compile exact data on the general trade union movement prior to 1891, for, during a period of 12 years, from 1878 to 1890, the German labor movement had to submit to the terrible consequences of the Anti-Socialist Law, which was supposed to have been directed merely against the political or Social-Democratic organization of the German working classes. As soon, however, as this law came into force it was also turned against the unions, which, in 1877, numbered about 50,000 members.

All German trade unions, with the exception of a few, were dissolved by the authorities, who "justified" their action by the aforementioned law, while others disbanded voluntarily to escape dissolution by the police.

It is hardly to be wondered at that the workers, after having been deprived of the power to use their political rights except in time of election, eagerly tried to make use of these rights wherever possible, even in trade unions, as soon as the barrier of the Anti-Socialist Law had been removed. This new tendency caused a great deal of controversy in the unions as to the organizing lines along which it was best to proceed. The first Trade Union Congress took place in 1892, when the delegates of the various unions decided by a large majority in favor of non-political unions, such as existed under the name of Central or "Free" Unions.

Quite a number of workers were at that time organized in local and autonomous unions, where the discussion of political questions had not been altogether barred. Up to 1908, the year in which the present Federal Association Law was passed, the association laws in most of the federated states of the German Empire did not, however, allow of women belonging to political societies. It might be added, moreover, that the dangers arising out of the fact of the women workers not being organized were not widely known until the industrial census report of the year 1895 was published. This report covered 5,250,000 whole-time women workers, employed in the various trades and industries; an increase of more than 1,000,000, or 24 per cent, since 1882. An energetic organizing campaign was started immediately and it is quite within the realms of possibility that the vote of a large number of female workers has been of some influence in deciding upon the best form of organization for the trade unions.

In 1911 there were in Germany 51 Free Trade Unions, 33 of which included female members. The number of female workers in these unions, taking the average throughout the year, was as follows: Bakers and confectioners, 3736; artificial flower makers, 567; brewery workers and millers, 1154; bookbinders, 14,127; printer's assistants, 9322; clerks, 296; factory workers, 21,853; butchers, 106; barbers and hairdressers, 1; gardeners, 17; hotel and restaurant workers, 744; municipal workers, 795; glaziers, 1; shop assistants, 8679; wood workers, 5819; hatters, 4414; fur workers, 1451; co-operative storekeepers, 154; leather workers, 1096; lithographers, 9; painters, 31; metal workers, 25,103; porcelain workers, 2260; saddlers and portfolio makers, 1161; tailors, 9363; boot and shoe operatives, 7939; stone workers, 62; tobacco workers, 16,870; upholsterers, 129; textile workers, 45,651; transport workers, 6579; cigar sorters, 953.

It must be admitted that the number of organized women workers is very low when compared with male trade unionists, but there is no doubt that the spirit of trade unionism is gaining an ever stronger hold among the female workers as well. Women workers will much more readily recognize the benefits of trade union action the sooner they realize that their position as wage earners is far from a temporary one, as the same, except in rare cases, does not terminate at the time they marry.

Propaganda work is, in most cases, carried on on the same lines, but more or less adapted to the specific conditions obtaining in the various trades. In 1905 the Free Trade Unions established a special center for the organization of women workers, called the Women Workers' Secretariat, which is part of the General Commission of German Trade Unions (the latter body is synonymous to the executive of the American Federation of Labor). A lady secretary was appointed as head of the new department, which is to collect and prepare all data relative to women workers and their organizations, for further use in the unions.

"Christian" Trade Unions. There are other organizations conducted on more or less trade union lines, which report female members, but their numbers are really insignificant when compared with those affiliated to the Free Trade Unions. The "Christian" Unions may be considered to be the group of the next importance, as far as numbers and influence are concerned. These Christian Unions were formed

at a time when the Free Trade Unions had been in existence for many years.

The object of the founders was not so much to organize the Christian workers for the purpose of bringing about their industrial protection and a spirit of self-help, but rather to prevent the workers in those parts of the country where the Church's influence was still very strong from joining the Free Unions.

It was also hoped that the Christian Unions would constitute a solid opposition to the workers' political party—the Social-Democratic party. Little doubt exists as to the truth of this statement, for the Christian Unions were not created until the Free Unions, in the nineties, had clearly demonstrated their power and influence upon wages and labor conditions generally. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Christian Unions, in spite of all the protection and encouragement vouchsafed them by the ecclesiastical and state authorities, employers, etc., have gained a certain foothold in the South of Germany and in the Rhine Province.

The Christian Unions numbered 27,152 female workers in 1911, distributed over 14 unions, viz., railway servants of Wurtemberg, 23; gardeners, 3; lithographers, 216; women home workers, 6999; wood workers, 169; potter workers, 84; sick attendants, 509; leather workers, 459; metal workers, 794; workers in the food stuff trades, 187; tailors, 266; municipal and transport workers, 504; tobacco workers, 3395; textile workers, 13,544.

The Women Home Workers' Union is the only organization catering exclusively for females, while all other unions accept members of both sexes. Efforts were made in the beginning to establish separate Christian Women Workers' Unions in the different trade, but this form of organization was not found to be satisfactory.

The Christian Women Home Workers' Union is almost exclusively under the leadership of ladies outside of the working class altogether. Their last convention was held recently, when much of the time was taken up by eulogies to certain members of the Emperor's family. The larger number of those taking part in the proceedings were "honorary workers," while a small bunch of women of their different trades, had to content themselves with a little room at the back of the hall.

Certain trade sections have been formed within a number of Catholic Working Men's Societies—the Catholic Trade Groups. They are often mistaken for Christian Trade Unions. Similar bodies are in existence for women workers. These Catholic Trade Groups, however, cannot be classed as trade unions, for their object is not to obtain better conditions of pay and work, but merely to fight Socialism. Moreover, they have repeatedly acted as strikebreaking agencies. Their leaders are Catholic priests. Statistics concerning membership published by these groups are of little value as the membership is not limited to workers alone. The Catholic Trade Groups, as well as the Christian Unions, publish their own journals for female members, but these papers also are chiefly devoted to attacks against the Social Democratic party, instead of being used to foster trade union education and solidarity.

Commercial Union for Employees.

The Commercial Union for Women Employees is another organization of women workers that should be mentioned. This society was formed in 1889 in Berlin under the name of "Commercial and Trade Relief Society for Employees." The sphere of activity was broadened so as to cover the whole of Germany in 1902. This organization had been established chiefly for philanthropic purposes, but the rules were amended in 1905 so as to admit of certain trade union objects being included in its programs. These objects are not pursued by means of trade union action or methods, but merely by presenting petitions to the Reichstag, to the various departments of the government, or to the employers, etc. This society, which in 1911 numbered 32,177 members, has certainly done a great deal on behalf of its members, especially by means of its employment bureau and benefit features.

The Commercial Union for Employees has forfeited much of the sympathies of the labor movement on account of its recent attitude upon the occasion of the election of members to the boards of the newly-established state insurance scheme for private employees, which took place all over the Empire. They then refused to co-operate with such organizations as recognized the equality of both sexes, but joined hands with the worst enemies of the labor movement—the societies which make it a special point of their program to combat women's work in the most unscrupulous and detestable manner. Those who are acquainted with the conditions prevailing in Germany, do not, therefore, attach much importance to the fact that the

Commercial Union obtained a few seats on the new insurance boards. Under the circumstances it ill behooves them to be proud of their "achievement."

There are no other organizations of women workers or employees of any importance in Germany. A number of local or otherwise organized societies exist, often under the patronage of employers, who are usually admitted to the membership as well. It was, in fact, usually the employers who created these societies, openly or secretly holding the reins. These societies are of no importance whatever as regards their influence upon the women workers and employes, but are constantly adding to the confusion and dismay among the women workers and employes.

The Free Trade Unions were the first to organize women workers. Most of the other trade organizations, now catering for female members were established for fear of the Free Unions and of the ever spreading Socialist ideas. The program and daily work of the Free Trade unions prove that as far as party politics are concerned they are absolutely non-partisan organizations, believing, as they do, at the same time, the Social-Democratic party to be the mouthpiece of the working classes, not only because this party represents the German working classes, but mainly because all other political parties have failed whenever the interests of the working classes were at stake.

This attitude of the Free Trade Unions has given rise to much criticism, not only on the part of the government, but also on the part of all other political parties, whose efforts to pose as friends of labor have often been exposed by the Socialist members of Parliament. It is quite natural that unions should find no favor in the employers' camp. All other groups of trade unions are also opposed to the Free Trade Unions, who, by their energetic action in all wage movements, have compelled the dual organizations to show their real colors, much to their anger and disgust. It has always been proved, in such instances, how little interest all these pseudo unions really take in the workers' cause.

Group of Unions	Total Membership
Free Trade Unions	2,320,986
Christian Unions	340,957
Commercial Unions for Employees	32,177
Group of Unions	Female Members
Free Trade Unions	191,332
Christian Unions	27,152
Commercial Unions for Employees	32,177

The Free Trade Unions thus stand alone in their fight, trusting to their good cause and fighting with all possible energy to attain their objects. They have hitherto held their ground against a host of enemies. The strength and virility of their federated bodies has increased every year, thus giving the organized women workers cause to hopefully await their further development, which is bound to eventually lead us to full equality of both sexes and to the complete emancipation of the working classes.

BRITISH RAILROAD MISDEADS.

Fatalities and Injuries Less in 1912 Than in Preceding Year.

Reports to the British Board of Trade by the railways of Great Britain show that in 1912 1019 persons were killed by train accidents and 8700 injured, as compared with 1070 killed and 8345 injured in 1911. Not only was there a smaller number of fatal accidents in the last year than in the preceding, but the record was also encouraging when compared with the average yearly mishaps in the period from 1901 to 1910. In the decade 1904 persons were killed each year. The average of injured in the 10-year stretch, 7348 per year, was, however, lower than in either 1912 or 1911. Of the total killed last year from accidents to trains only 19 were passengers—a figure which stands out strikingly in contrast with railroad records in this country, which frequently have shown as many deaths resultant from a single wreck. Passengers injured in mishaps to trains numbered 683. Ninety passengers were killed from other causes while traveling, and 2146 injured. Of "other persons" there were 2158 trespassers to meet death, including suicides, and 127 injured, and 69 were killed while crossing the tracks and 32 hurt. In addition to accidents connected with the running of trains and the movement of cars a large number of mishaps occurred on railroad property, which accounted for the deaths of 107 and the injury of 23,320 persons.

His Later Resolve.

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BREWERY WORKERS—Branch 111, Clarence Larsen, secretary. 271 Thirty-third avenue.
BAITENDERS No. 142—Alternate Sundays, 3 P. M., Labor Union Hall, Lee Herring, president, 450 Exchange street; C. L. Gallagher, secretary, 259 Bond; Charles Wisch, chairman sick committee, 903 Exchange street.
BARBERS No. 107—Last Monday, 8 P. M., Union Labor Hall, H. D. Kribbs, president.
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FISHERMEN'S UNION—Meets at Fishermen's Hall, first Saturday, 7:30 P. M. H. M. Lorransen, Fishermen's Hall.
LANGSHOREMEN'S UNION—Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8 P. M., Longshoremen's Hall, 571 Bond street. Chas. Johnson, president; C. H. Thompson, secretary and business agent, 577 Bond street.
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PAINTERS' UNION 684—Meets second and fourth Thursdays, 8 P. M., Longshoremen's Hall, 571 Bond street. Walter Stangland, recording secretary, 371 18th street.
RETAIL CLERKS LOCAL 147—Meets third Thursdays, 8 P. M., Rosenberg's Hall, Wm. Thompson, president; Mary E. McCrea, recording secretary.
TEAM DRIVERS No. 182—First and third Tuesdays, 8 P. M., Union Labor Hall, President, G. M. Christensen, 549 Duane; secretary-treasurer, Len Lowrey, 480 Commercial street.
TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION—Andrew Maniatis, president; Louis Lemberg, secretary.

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BAKER TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION No. 683—John A. Andrews, president; M. D. Pingleton, secretary-treasurer, Box 28.
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CIGARMAKERS No. 487—Meets first Wednesday in each month. J. F. Fenrod, secretary.
CARPENTERS No. 536—Meets Tuesday evenings, C. E. Fortering, secretary.
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS, C. W. MOON LODGE No. 459—Frank M. Shurtliff, secretary.
PAINTERS, PAPER HANGERS AND DECORATORS OF AMERICA, No. 1008—Meets Thursday evenings, Lyndale Bldg., Room 17, Ed G. Phillips, secretary, 2203 Church street.
PLUMBERS AND STEAM FITTERS No. 248—Meets second and fourth Fridays, C. W. Bishop, 2108 Resort street.

EUGENE.
TYPOGRAPHICAL No. 498—Last Sunday in each month, 2 P. M., at American Hall. Walter R. Dimm, secretary.
PLUMBERS AND STEAM FITTERS No. 481—Monday evening, 8 o'clock, Eighth and William streets. W. G. Harbinson, secretary, Box 522.
GRANTS PASS.
PLUMBERS, G. F. & S. F. No. 104—Meets Thursday evening, Richard Vanner, secretary; Jack T. Went, president; Box 338 Grants Pass, Ore.

HOOD RIVER.
PLUMBERS AND STEAM FITTERS No. 511—A. Norder, secretary, Hood River, Ore.
KLAMATH FALLS.
PLUMBERS No. 513—C. R. Hastings, recording secretary, Box 573, Klamath Falls, Oregon.
LA GRANDE.
BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD TRAINMEN, LOCAL 315—Meets first and third Tuesdays of each month at 8 P. M., K. of P. Hall, La Grande, Ore. A. J. Allstadt, secretary, 1922 Y avenue, La Grande, Ore.

MEDFORD.
BARBERS' UNION No. 309—Meets first and third Thursday nights at Medford Hotel Barber Shop, W. E. Johnson, secretary, 128 W. Main street.
CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL—Meets every Monday night at Smith's Hall, C. W. Harrington, secretary, 1812 West Tenth street.
CARPENTERS' UNION No. 1840—Meets every Wednesday night at Smith's Hall, Phil Jirmata, secretary, Ross Court.
ELECTRICAL WORKERS' UNION No. 657—Meets every Thursday night at Smith's Hall, H. O. Purucker, recording secretary, Box 68; G. Henselman, financial secretary, Box 68; H. S. Alkin, president.
LATHERS' UNION No. 342—Meets first Friday each month at 244 S. Central avenue, F. H. Miller, secretary, 244 S. Central Av.
PLASTERERS' UNION—Meets first Thursday each month, F. Rothwell, secretary General Delivery.
PLUMBERS AND STEAM FITTERS No. 562—Meets every Friday night at Smith's Hall, A. A. McKay, secretary.
TEAMSTERS' UNION No. 178—Meets every Tuesday night at Smith's Hall, O. O. Parker, secretary, 215 Knight street.

ROSEBURG.
LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS No. 476—V. O. Bartlett, secretary, Roseburg, Oregon.
CENTRAL LABOR UNION—Corner Cass and Ferguson, R. C.
LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN AND ENGINEERS, ROSEBURG LODGE No. 542—W. J. Kanner, recording secretary, box 264, Roseburg, Oregon.
CARPENTERS No. 415—Friday evening, Labor Hall, 323 N. Jackson, C. L. Sun, secretary.
PLUMBERS AND STEAM FITTERS No. 428—Meets Sunday morning, W. W. Howell, care B. A. Mahon.
PAINTERS No. 887—Corner Cass and Stevens streets, Friday night, J. L. Smith, R. C.
TEAMSTERS No. 189—Wednesday night, Labor Hall, 323 N. Jackson, John H. Ferguson, secretary.

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BREWERY WORKERS No. 320—Branch 1, Frank Schelner, secretary, P. O. Box 241, Salem, Oregon.
CARPENTERS 1065—Meet Union Hall every Saturday at 7:30 P. M., Wm. Short, president; Chris J. Kernan, secretary, 260 N. 18th street.
ELECTRICAL WORKERS No. 512—Patton Hall, State street, Mondays at 8 P. M. W. C. LeRoy Brown, financial secretary, 450 North Nineteenth street.
PAINTERS No. 724—Dorrance Sign Shop, S. Liberty street, first and third Thursdays at 8 P. M. Ernest G. Burroll, secretary, R. D. 7, Box 6-B.
TYPOGRAPHICAL No. 210—Meets first Sunday in each month, 420 State St. Harry H. Hill, secretary, 224 North Front street.

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PAVING CUTTERS' UNION OF THE U. S. AND CANADA, BRANCH No. 47—St. Helens, Oregon.
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BAITENDERS No. 425—Second and fourth Sundays, Union Hall, at 3 P. M., E. R. Brown, secretary.
CARPENTERS' LOCAL No. 976—Meets every Saturday evening in Sones hall, Main street, between Fifth and Sixth, E. Y. Butts, recording secretary.
PAINTERS—Monday night, Painters' Hall, Wall block, Chas. Christ, secretary, care E. M. Meach.
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