

STRUCTURE

In 1945 when the German labor movement was reestablished, youth work was initiated by the city central body without regard to the individual industrial union affiliation of young workers. Out of these general trade union youth groups came leaders for the sections set up by the 16 individual trade unions. These groups in turn developed leadership in individual shops and plants, so that, in the end, virtually every enterprise of any size had its own youth groups.

The trend has thus been from youth work, directed by a central youth secretariat, to youth sections of the various industrial unions working with varying degrees of coordination with the secretariat. In the three cities studied, a full time secretary mans the secretariat; in other Bavarian cities the work is carried with volunteers. But even where professional staff is available, the degree of coordination between the various unions varies widely. In some unions, the lines of coordination to their own national youth offices are stronger than to the city secretariat; in others, the secretariat may actually handle shop grievances for a particular union. It would in general be safe to say that until now the cooperation between the city youth secretariat and the youth sections of the various unions has developed according to the talents, free time, and availability of the leadership. However, there is a growing tendency for the industrial unions to take a primary interest in their own youth to the exclusion of any broader loyalty or responsibility.

This development undoubtedly reflects the reorganization now in process within the Western German labor movement. Individual industrial unions are assuming an increasingly important role, while the federation districts which formerly were the directing agencies, have since the Munich Federation Congress (October 1949) more restricted functions.

This trend to the industrial unions is further strengthened by the way in which youth work is financed. No per capita or other allotment is made for youth activity, except that employed secretaries are included in the general city payroll. Instead, each individual plan or project is presented as it arises to the city central body for city-wide youth activities, or to the individual union executive boards for their respective youth groups, and, if approved, funds are made available. As the city central bodies have less money and less power under the reorganization, the tendency again is for each union to finance its own youth program and for the city program

to have less resources. As a result, a premium is put on loyalty of the youth leaders to their respective unions, and in some cases, the tendency actually is to discourage their activity in the central union youth organization.