

FOREWORD

Labor unions in Germany can contribute much to the process of democratic reorientation which is one of the basic objectives of the occupation. Their devotion to democracy and international understanding prior to 1933 is but one reason for believing that organized labor in Germany may be expected to follow the same path. The German trade unions have learned through bitter experience that their organizations can truly fulfill the interests of the working population only within a democratic framework. They also possess, at least in Western Germany and among the democratic trade unions of Berlin, a determination to withstand totalitarian onslaughts regardless of the direction from which they may come.

In order to succeed in their efforts to restore a living faith in the values of democracy, the German trade unions must develop in their membership as well as in their leadership a keen understanding of the role of organized labor in a democratic society. The human resources required for the accomplishment of this mission were greatly impoverished during the Nazi regime when many of the former trade union leaders were exterminated and when an entire generation was raised in ignorance of genuine labor organization. German trade union leaders, who are well aware of the urgent need to make up these losses, are therefore devoting much attention to labor education.

The study prepared by Mrs. Cook was undertaken at a time when the initial efforts were being made in the reestablishment of labor education. It is a credit to the German trade unions that labor education has made some progress in the period since the report was written. Mrs. Cook's study represents an important contribution to an understanding of the background and the trends of thought which have made possible these later developments.



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