

LEADERSHIP

Each union has a youth executive committee made up representatives from the main organized plants and headed by a chairman. This union youth chairman has a three-fold function: to head up the youth work in his own union, to work as a member of the city-wide union youth committee, and to keep in contact with his own union's national youth work. Since these functionaries are almost without exception volunteers, working at a full-time job in a shop, their lives are very full indeed. In addition, the pressures resulting from the reorganization of the whole German trade union movement exert themselves on these young people too. For instance, the areas covered by a local union or central body in Bavaria have been greatly increased. Augsburg district is no longer Augsburg and its immediate environs but an area with a radius of 60-70 kilometers, including many small industrial towns where little or no youth work has been organized up to the present time. These young volunteer leaders feel very heavily the burden of trying to do organization work with only Sundays and evening time available. It will not be surprising under these circumstances if when pressures from the unions encourage the exclusive attention to affairs of their own union, that inter-union relations may suffer.

Although, at first, many group chairmen were appointed by the youth secretariats in order to get the organization going, they are now all elected by the groups they represent - chairmen in the factories (Jugendobmann) and presidents of the industrial union youth sections (Vorsitzender der Gewerkschaftsjugend). The youth chairman election is usually arranged to take place ahead of the works council election. If the elected youth chairman is 21 or over and is therefore eligible to membership in the works council, he is placed on the election list for the council. Until now every youth candidate standing for election has been elected.

If the youth chairman is under 21 and therefore ineligible to the council, the council chairman usually maintains a close working relationship with him and calls him in to council meetings when youth questions are discussed. In such cases although he has no vote on the final council decisions, his advice and recommendations are sought and listened to.