

Our English Page

The organization of social work in Sweden.

Private Organizations

Side by side with the official administrative organ there have been formed in Sweden, as in other countries, several private or semiofficial organizations for the different branches of social work. Only the most important central unions of this kind, therefore, need be mentioned here, especially such as have not specialised in any separate branch of social work but have a more general programme.

The first place among these organizations is held by the Central Association for Social Work, formed in 1903. This association, as its name implies, is intended to be a union of societies or groups of societies working for social progress or with practical social work as their object. The association has earlier embraced a considerable number of organizations of varying importance. As this somewhat heterogeneous composition gave rise to certain difficulties in the work of the association, it was reorganized in 1922, the number of organizations which were admitted to membership of the association and had a voice in the conduct of its affairs was limited to 10, representing different branches of the activities of the central association. These organizations, each in its own sphere occupying an authoritative position as a national union of local units, are the following:

- 1) The Union for the Education of the People.
- 2) The Swedish Poor Law and Child Welfare Association.
- 3) The Fredrika Bremer Society, a women's union founded in 1884 and named after the authoress Fredrika Bremer, with the object of working in various ways for the amelioration of the social position of women.
- 4) The General Association of Sickness Benefit Societies of Sweden.
- 5) The Co-operative Union.
- 6) The Central Union for Temperance Education.
- 7) The Swedish Anti-Tuberculosis Association.
- 8) The Swedish Towns' Association.
- 9) The Swedish Association of Country Communes.
- 10) The Swedish County Councils Union.

As implied by their names the three last-mentioned organizations constitute unions of the urban and rural communes and the County Councils (in the provinces), the objects of which are to further the communes and towns belonging to them with in-

formation on questions of communal administration and to watch their mutual interests in relation to outside influences, especially the State authorities. The Institute for Social-political and Communal Education and Research formed in Stockholm in 1920 may be mentioned as one of the most important results of the co-operation between these unions and the Central Association for Social Work.

In addition to the national unions the Swedish Red Cross should be mentioned first amongst the organizations with wider aims. The activity of this society naturally falls principally within the spheres of Hygiene and the Care of Sick, but it has also taken up a more extensive social and philanthropic activity, embracing amongst other things assistance to the needy in cases of acute unemployment and in other cases of pressing need. In this connection should further be mentioned the non-political women's organizations Women's Union of Citizens and The National Society of Swedish Housewives. The former may be regarded as a successor to the National Society for Women's Suffrage, which was dissolved after the passing of the law enfranchising women in 1921. Its chief object is to continue the said Society's activity for increasing women's interest in and knowledge of public matters, specially as regards the importance of qualifying women for official positions, and to promote the interests of women in the labour market. The Society of Housewives, founded in 1919, pursues a similar propaganda and informational activity as regards women's work in the women's work in the home. The society co-operates with corresponding societies in the other northern countries.

Other social organisations with more specialised activities are dealt with in later articles.

II. EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS.

1. System of Organizations and Agreements.

Labour Organizations. In Sweden, as in other countries, the idea of unions for trade purposes spread among the workmen first, and was afterwards adopted by the employers. The Swedish trade union movement started in the 'eighties and was modelled upon the corresponding movements in Denmark and Ger-

many and its most closely identified with the Anglo-Germanic type of trade union movement. One exception, however, is the syndicalistic trend, of which the French labour organizations are the prototypes.

To commence with, local trade unions were formed, which at first combined the districts. It was soon realised, however, that the solidarity of the workmen throughout the whole country who practised the same trade would be a more stable foundation for the trade union movement, and at the end of the 'eighties, therefore, were formed the trade unions, the first one in the printing trade. (1886). In 1899 the movement was further consolidated by the formation of a general central organization, the General Federation of Swedish Trade Unions, which in turn joined the so-called International Federation of Trade Unions (Fédération Syndicale Internationale), which had then been formed.

The national organization nowadays embraces the bulk of the organized workmen in Sweden. At the beginning of 1928, 36 labour associations, comprising a total of 438,000 members, belonged to it. There are a certain number of trade unions (altogether about 50,000 members) which for economic or tactical reasons have not formally associated themselves with the national organization, but which do not in principle adopt an oppositional standpoint. The only faction of importance within the trade union movement which, from an organizational point of view, is in opposition to the national organization is the syndicalistic group (about 30,000), which has formed a separate national organization. The National Organization of Swedish Workers, sections of the party, the so-called labour communes. When taken with a considerable degree of independence, especially so far as taking action against the employers is concerned. The attempts which in several instances have been made to form labour organizations with a less aggressive attitude towards the employers, with a Christian, "patriotic", or middle-class liberal tendency. These members have in several cases, where they have lasting results. The only existing organization of this within the trade union, security worth mentioning is the National Organization for Liberty of Labour, which is chiefly concentrated in the forest districts of Norrland, with the so-called red interna-

the members of which, however, largely consist of independent farmers who have come into conflict with the organized labourers on account of their competition for employment during the lumbering season.

During the earlier years of the trade union movement, trade solidarity constituted the strongest bond between the members, and as, therefore, where several trades were represented in one industrial undertaking, the workmen usually belonged to an equivalent number of organizations, development during later years has been towards an amalgamation into one single union of all the workmen employed in one industry. The congress of the general federation has spoken on several occasions in favour of a reorganization of the trade unions in accordance with the so-called principle of industrial unions, the superiority of which over the previous method of organization is considered to lie in the fact that it renders possible more concerted action in the settlements with the employers and their organizations. However, within several of the trade unions objections have been raised against the reconstruction of the system of organization which this reform would imply, and it is therefore probable that it will only be effected step by step and with considerable modifications. The Swedish trade union movement has kept in close touch with the Social-democratic labour party during the whole period of its development. Ever since the party was formed (1889), its members have largely consisted of workmen organized according to trades, who through their local trade unions have collectively joined the local sections of the party, the so-called labour communes. When taken with a considerable degree of independence, especially so far as taking action against the employers is concerned. The attempts which in several instances have been made to form labour organizations with a less aggressive attitude towards the employers, with a Christian, "patriotic", or middle-class liberal tendency. These members have in several cases, where they have lasting results. The only existing organization of this within the trade union, security worth mentioning is the National Organization for Liberty of Labour, which is chiefly concentrated in the forest districts of Norrland, with the so-called red interna-

tional federation of trade unions has not been successful.

Bad Temper.

A man's most constant companion is himself — a companion never to be shaken off from birth to death. Yet he who is careful to choose desirable companions often forgets to train himself in the essentials of happy living. To live in the same house with a bad temper is disagreeable enough; but some men and women condemn themselves to live in the same body with a bad temper — which is one of the worst discomforts imaginable.

Honor.

Honor is but the reflection of a man's own actions shining bright in the face of all about him, and from thence rebounding upon himself. — Wise Sayings.

Talk

I don't like to talk with people who always agree with me. It is amusing to coquette with an echo a little while, but one soon tires of it. — O. W. Holmes.

Calm of Nature

It seems as if it were Nature's aim Sabbath, and the verra waters were at rest. Look down upon the vale profound, and the stream is without motion! No doubt, if you were walking along the bank, it would be murmuring with your feet. But here — here up among the hills, we can imagine it asleep, even like the well within reach of my staff. — Prof. Wilson.

Happiness

Man is the artificer of his own happiness. Let him beware how he complains of the disposition of circumstances, for it is his own disposition he blames. — T. D. Thoreau.

True

Do not spend your time in envying others who, to your thinking, are better off than yourself, but in trying to live the higher life, which is possible to all who strive and strain after the attainment of it; do not be content with a low standard of morality, which only degrades all that is best in you.

An Aim in Life

An aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding; and it is not to be found in the gamation of the trade unions foreign lands, but in the heart forest districts of Norrland, with the so-called red interna-

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