

Facilities Run by the *Arbeiterwohlfahrt* [Workers' Welfare Association] (1927)

Abstract

These scenes from a 1927 documentary about the Workers' Welfare Association [*Arbeiterwohlfahrt*, or AWO] call attention to that organization's provision of numerous critical services to people in need. (Another clip from this same film, which focused on an AWO-run kindergarten, appears in a different section of this GHDI volume.) The film includes shots of a children's home in Gohrisch, for instance, an idyllic retreat in the mountainous region southeast of Dresden known as "Saxon Switzerland," as well as footage of a recovery home for alcoholics in Naumburg an der Saale, a town southwest of Leipzig. One frame shows a child at a youth center in Cologne-Deutz in front of a poster that had reprinted a key passage from the 1922 Reich Youth Welfare Act (RJWG) that could easily have served as one of AWO's mottos, "Every German child has a right to an education that promotes physical, mental, and social competence." Although most AWO services addressed the daily needs of children and adults in urban areas, this film emphasizes the association's extensive network of bucolic retreats and holiday centers for orphans, mothers, the disabled, the unhoused, and struggling families. These places offered relaxation and recreation, as well as education and basic needs.

AWO emerged from an initiative of the SPD politician and social reformer Marie Juchacz in December 1919 to dramatically increase the welfare services provided by the Social Democratic Party. The recently ended war and naval blockade had dramatically expanded the number of desperately struggling Germans, from widows and orphans to asylum seekers and wounded veterans. At a time when churches still remained the only sources of basic charity and social support, Juchacz's initial proposal reflected remarkable vision. Her ongoing efforts expanded AWO dramatically over the following decade to include retirement homes, counseling centers, free concerts, and childcare.

Source

The main committee of the Workers' Welfare Association [*Arbeiterwohlfahrt*, AWO] in Berlin presents a tour of the homes and facilities run by the Workers' Welfare Association.

The range of welfare services provided by the Workers' Welfare Association is diverse. The rehabilitation facility for people suffering from alcoholism in Naumburg an der Saale.

A glance at the cozy day room.

In Munich...

Apprentice dormitory run by AWO.

The "Schwarzwaldheim Ludwig Frank" is the highest-altitude children's sanatorium in Germany, located in the Black Forest above Triberg (Baden) at an altitude of 1100 meters.

The sanatorium's physician orders...

exercise...

...and rest in the fresh air.

The chairwoman of the main committee of the Workers' Welfare Association, Ms. Marie Juchacz, and the head physician during a preliminary discussion of an extension.

A housing project in Cologne-Deutz run by the Workers' Welfare Association.

It offers accommodation to homeless men and can take in 330 residents.

The residents' reading room.

The AWO youth and childcare center at Cologne-Deutz.

[Art. 1 of the Child Welfare Act: "Every German child has a right to an education in physical, mental and social fitness."]

This game keeps the children away from the three-days-long carnival on the streets of Cologne.

The AWO orphanage is located at Gerresheim near Düsseldorf...

...it cares for the orphans of fallen soldiers.

At the AWO summer camp at Hamberge in Mecklenburg.

Source: *Die Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (clip), prod. Hauptausschuss für Arbeiterwohlfahrt, 1927. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 648299. <https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/648299/551582>

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