

Unemployed Stenotypist Seeks Work (December 1931)

Abstract

The stereotypes of the “New Woman” that developed during the Weimar era took a variety of forms – *flapper*, *garçonne*, *girl*. With the introduction of new technologies, such as the typewriter and the telephone, yet another stereotype came into existence: the working woman as office worker, i.e. secretary or typist. The image was reinforced in fashion magazines, illustrated weeklies, and films such as Wilhelm Thiele’s *Die Privatsekretärin* (1931) and Richard Oswald’s *Arm wie eine Kirchenmaus* (1931), both of which presented female office workers as role models. With the onset of the world economic crisis and depression of 1929, unemployment affected Germany’s white-collar population to a greater extent than ever before. Young, semi-skilled women were among those who suffered most.

The photograph below features a young unemployed stenotypist in search of office work. The sign around her neck reads:

Hello!
I’m looking for work!
I can type and do shorthand,
I know French and English,
I will accept any kind of domestic employment,
I can do everything that requires an attentive mind.

Source



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